Dungeon®
ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES
MAY/JUNE 1994 ISSUE #47
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COVER: All is not as peaceful as it seems in Qadib. The professor's daughter may be the next victim of the holy slayer lurking in Robin Wood's cover painting for "The Assassin Within."

Old and New

This issue's authors are an even split of old and new faces, three of each. It may seem that DUNGEON® adventures are written by just a few regular authors, but it's not a closed club. In fact, we're constantly looking for new writers. Some continue to write and become regulars; others publish once and then vanish. Even our regular authors make it into these pages the hard way with every submission, sending out a query and then a full adventure.

DUNGEON magazine's most prolific author, Willie Walsh, returns this month with another fine adventure, "Fraggart's Contraption" (and more are on the way). Paul Culotta seems like a regular—we've accepted four of his adventures, though only "The Inheritance" has appeared in these pages (issue #26). This time, he won us over with the tale of an assassin and a scholar, our first AL-QADIM® adventure. Christopher Perkins's name may be familiar now, but he first broke into print just 10 issues ago. It's always a joy to find a first-rate manuscript in the enormous pile of queries, and Chris's first query was soon followed by many, many more. He was the first regular contributor I found.

Three new talents make their first appearance in this issue. Rona Kreekel of the Netherlands presents "Smouldering Mane," a SideTrek adventure with the unusual setting of a fire on an African savannah. David Wright rushed us revisions of "Shades of Darkness" just before he set sail to Japan. We hope to see more from him soon. Steve Loken got our attention by stressing details, capturing the mood of a lonely subarctic settlement perfectly in "When the Light Goes Out."

Finally, our hoard of quotes for this page is running low. If you send a quote and we use it, we'll send you a nice prize.

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The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Romans 13:11

LETTERS

Please let us know what you think about this issue of DUNGEON® Adventures. Although we can't print every letter we receive, we read them all and seriously consider your comments and suggestions. Write to: Letters, DUNGEON Adventures, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A. You can also contact us by sending electronic mail to tsr.mags@genie.geis.com.

Excessive Role-Playing

Three cheers for John Nowakowski ("Letters," DUNGEON #45)! Finally, someone is willing to address an issue that has been sticking in my craw for too long: Namely, the insistence among many gamers to stress role-playing above all else. I too have had run-ins with people who are wonderful role-players (or proudly claim to be) but lousy gamers. When I started gaming 15 years ago, it was possible to finish an adventure in a single night. No more. Nowadays, people want to role-play every last thing their characters do, often to the extent that the game never goes anywhere and single adventures take weeks. Refereeing players like this is endlessly frustrating, because they spend too much time arguing about what their characters know or what they can do, just to be sure they're "role-playing the character properly." I have even had a player let her character die because, as she put it, "My character's intelligence is too low to figure a way out of this." This, in my opinion, is taking things too far.

Playing with role-playing-obsessed DMs is even worse. I have often spent hours doing nothing but buying equipment and negotiating transactions that ought to be completed in a few minutes at most. If I want to spend an hour buying something, I can go to the mall. There is nothing wrong with this sort of play when it involves something integral to the plot, but nowadays DMs think they have to role-play every last little interaction or run the risk of having their campaigns tarred by the epithet "hack-and-slay."

My recollection is that this phrase came about to describe a type of dungeon that was common in the early days, particularly with novice DMs: Enter dungeon, kill monsters, take treasure. That, rightly, is a scenario to be avoided, but the slur is now applied to any adventure that puts combat on an equal footing with role-playing, or, as John pointed out, an adventure where—gasp!—the characters might end up getting killed. This is stupid and ultimately self-defeating, because a game without gaming is little more than an episode of "cops-and-robbers." In fact, let me go even further: Campaigns that are all role-playing are, to me, far more boring than campaigns that are all combat. At least in the latter form, the players are doing something. Advanced gaming is not just good role-playing. It is, as John said, recognizing the proper balance between role-playing, problem-solving, *and* combat. Luckily, there are people who can do this. I just wish they weren't so hard to find.

Thomas W. Overton
972 Hilgard #101
Los Angeles, California 90024

Setting the Scene

The pot keeps bubbling about plots, and Thomas Whitten's letter in issue #46 caught my eye, so here is a little more eye of newt and baboon's blood to add to the brew.

I totally agree with Mr.Whitten that quality tools are always needed to intellectually stimulate both the players and the DM. These tools can be the type of detailed settings that he describes. The question is whether they belong in DUNGEON magazine as products separate and apart from plot-driven adventures.

Are the quality tools Mr.Whitten desires available elsewhere? To answer this, all one has to do is look at DRAGON® Magazine #200 and review the product list for 1994. There are loads of detailed settings being produced by TSR, and if no one has noticed, DRAGON Magazine itself has published campaign settings as feature articles ("The City of Lofty Pillars," by Steve Kurtz in DRAGON #201 is just one example). And, as Mr. Whitten mentions, POLYHEDRON® Newszine publishes articles on various places in the Living City. (See the latest issue for a very nice piece on a brewery in Ravens Bluff.)

So with all of this new material (not to mention the reams of material previously published), why would we want even more in DUNGEON magazine? Seriously, folks, if you can't get inspiration for your campaigns by the dozens and dozens of boxed sets, accessory packs, accessory books, adventure packs, Volo's Guides, novels, short stories, and the like, there are also dozens and dozens of settings in other game systems that can be easily modified for the AD&D® game. Honest, Thomas, there is a *lot* of stuff out there that you can use for your campaign! And I'll bet you haven't read it all. Heck, I suspect that no one at TSR has read it all!

This is not to say that I don't appreciate a good adventure that has an excellent setting or tool for further adventures as a byproduct. Ted Zuvich's

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"A Hot Day in L'Trel" (issue #44) and Randy Maxwell's "Goblin Fever" (issue #46) are fine examples of this. Another good tool was the pullout mockup of the bar in Willie Walsh's "A Wrastle With Bertrum" (issue #30).

But oh no, please don't insist on putting articles, settings, and other tools by themselves in a great magazine that is already focused well on providing quality adventures that are easily adaptable, well written, and above all, fun. For me the answer is easy: If I want a setting for a campaign I get it in one of many other products. But if I want a great adventure that I can quickly insert into a campaign, I turn to DUNGEON Adventures. That's why I subscribe.

Paul F. Culotta
Fairfax, VA

Evolution of a Gamer

I am writing this letter in response to four letters, all of which are in issue #44, specifically those written by Richard Marchal, Christina Stiles, Matt Mulcahy, and Mark Krzeminski. The first two of these letters deal with "plotless" adventures, the third with stupid players, and the fourth with inexperienced DMs. I think all four are related.

First, plotless adventures are exactly what stupid players need to get them started. I don't think many players are really stupid; they just don't know how to play the game yet. I've had a few players like that; they just need to learn how to act, which is what role-playing is. There isn't much that can go wrong with the plot in a dungeon, except not being able to kill the kobolds that have the key to the door to the treasure room. With enough experience points and a good sword, that problem can be easily overcome.

Second, DMs who run their parties through plotless dungeon adventures don't have much to describe. I've found that if I put in enough monsters and traps (and plenty of treasure—all silver and copper pieces), my players don't complain about a lack of description. In fact, just describing the dungeon so they can map it takes enough time.

Next, once a DM gets good enough at describing the plotless, dull, dreary dungeon, he can add special effects such as moans, cobwebs, or shadows (not the monster) that follow PCs around for no reason. Next thing you know, you'll be out in the wilderness telling the players what type of tree is most prevalent in the area and how often quicksand is encountered.

Fourth, some people who were around when AD&D was still in its first edition grew up on modules that took place in a dungeon, had no plot to them apart from the gaining of wealth and experience, yet were loads of fun. My favorite module is still "Horror on the Hill," and who can forget "The Ghost of Lion Castle"? Intricate adventures like those required thought to make and were some of the best times I have ever had.

Finally, I would like to point out that in adventures with plots, the DM ends up creating a lot of the characters' personality. In plotless adventures, the players are the ones who give personality to the characters. In a plotless adventure, there is no reason for a fighter to always use a dagger with a two-foot hilt to fight off orcs, he just does. With adventures with plots, rich uncles are dying off right and left, the beloved home city is burning down, and that nasty vampire lord is always after the character. Where in the Abyss can you find a vampire that can't finish off a party of 5th-level characters? Or a party of 12th-level characters that can't kill the vampire on the first or second try? There is no way that a plot like that could work for several adventures without the DM pushing things too far.

Hank Schaefer
Toledo, Ohio

A Matter of Scale

First off, I'd like to tip my hat and shake the hand of Randy Maxwell, who wrote "Goblin Fever" in issue #46. I thought it was an excellent adventure and deserves recognition.

But there was just one thing wrong with it. As I was reading over the "Temple of the Pools" section, something caught my eye. It seems that the pools surrounding the temple were supposedly 75′ in diameter. "Big pools!" I thought. Then I checked the scale of the temple itself. From pool to pool it measures 625′. Hmmmm. A temple that's actually larger than the city tile it's depicted on (500′ square). Then I smiled and thought, "This town's got one hell of an architect!"

After bringing the scale down to a more sensible one square = 10′, everything was fine. The pools become 30′ in diameter, and the size of the temple shrinks to 250′. I don't know whose fault this was (DUNGEON magazine's or Randy's), but I'm quite sure it wasn't done intentionally. I must say that I've never enjoyed a typo this much before!

Edward A. Jacobs
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

Any error that reaches the readers is always the fault of the editors. Mr. Jacobs's fix is appropriate, and we recommend it to everyone running this adventure.

Unorthodox Masterpiece

Timothy Ide's "Train of Events" (issue #44) is exactly the one-of-a-kind adventure that makes DUNGEON magazine the great periodical that it is. Although fitting this type of adventure into a carefully prepared campaign world could lead to devastating repercussions, as Tim Scott's letter in DUNGEON #46 dealt with, I thank Mr. Ide for the unique opportunities surrounding his adventure.

For all DMs using worlds created by combining TSR-generated worlds, or inventing worlds of our own, unusual and high-character adventures like "Train of Events" are gold mines. Using our creative minds as the tools, we can "mine" a year's worth of adventuring from unorthodox masterpieces like Mr. Ide's.

Mr. Scott's letter refers to the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide* table showing items that should and shouldn't be available to characters within a given historical framework. How many DMs, besides myself, have been using that table for way too many years? Mr. Ide's adventure is a fantastic example of the creative outburst that all DMs should experiment with. Is this not DUNGEON magazine's purpose?

Kurt Dudas
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Engines of the Ancients

While I basically agree with Tim Scott's wish ("Letters," DUNGEON #46) to "keep unnecessary anachronisms . . . to a minimum" and to "respect the expectations" of the players (by which he seems to mean a western European type world between the early Middle Ages and the late Renaissance), I think

Continued on page 16

SHADES OF DARKNESS

BY DAVID C. WRIGHT

Hear the voices from the shadows.

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

David is currently stationed in Japan with the United States Navy. This is his first module in DUNGEON® Adventures. David says, "I would like to thank my friend Larry for introducing me to the AD&D® game 15 years ago. Most of all, I want to thank my wife, Nicole, for her invaluable support during my first foray into writing."

"Shades of Darkness" is an AD&D® game adventure for 4-5 neutral- or good-aligned player characters of levels 4-6 (about 22 total levels). A well-balanced party including at least one PC of each character class will work best. This adventure may be placed in any relatively peaceful portion of the DM's world. The setting should be near a small wooded area that is free of monsters.

Adventure Background

Safehearth is a small village located at the crossroads of two trails, far from any danger or excitement. Life here is quiet, with few visitors or distractions. The town was founded shortly after the establishment of a manor house 40 years ago by Jamisar Baylon, an advisor to the duke's court. After Jamisar retired 15 years ago, he left the capital to live the rest of his life in the peace of the country. Jamisar is technically the lord of the village, but he allows the villagers to run their own lives. Jamisar lives with his wife, Falicia, and his son Maxston.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

As mentioned earlier, the village of Safehearth is ordinarily a quiet place. However, the day that the PCs arrive is far from ordinary. The villagers are in an uproar concerning a raid on the local manor house. A band of dwarves seen recently in the area has apparently conducted an attack on the manor, killing everyone they found. The only survivor, the manor's blacksmith, claims that the house was attacked by a group of "grubby, short people."

As the PCs will discover, dwarves are not responsible for the raid. The culprits are a group of dark creepers and their leader, a dark stalker. These villains entered the manor house by an underground waterway that runs through the manor's cellar. The dark creatures looted the manor, taking all the magical items they could find.

Lord Baylon had gone to retrieve a book from his library when he stumbled on the dark creepers midway through their raid. He was cut down before he could raise the alarm. The dark creepers quickly killed his wife and captured his son. After ransacking the house, the dark creepers retreated underground to celebrate their victory and to divide the loot.

During the adventure, the PCs are persuaded to explore the manor house and to find the culprits. While investigating, the PCs should find the underground stream and clues leading to the villains.

Special Notes

The DM should be familiar with the rules covering darkness, as well as the modifiers on page 119 of the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* and the entries describing dark creepers and dark stalkers in the *Monstrous Compendium® FIEND FOLIO®* appendix (MC14).

The dark creeper has the abilities of a 4th-level thief. The average dark creeper has the following thief abilities: PP 15%, OL 10%, FT 5%, MS 70%, HS 65%, DN 15%, CW 60%, RL 0%, and double damage from backstab. In addition, the vision of the dark creepers and dark stalkers is not hampered by their *darkness*. Infravision is useless in this *darkness*, but the blind-fighting proficiency provides its normal bonuses. Also, because dark creepers have the innate ability to *detect magic*, they target PCs planning to use magical items. Nearby dark creepers use overbearing attacks, then try to wrestle the item away. The dark creepers are devious, conniving individuals.

Arrival in Safehearth

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It is late in the afternoon of a drizzly day. You have been traveling all day along a winding, wooded trail. The only people you have seen were a group of dwarves and a gnome camping along the trail. They said that there was a town nearby named Safehearth, and that it's the only place around where you could find decent shelter. Of course, they also said that it was only a short distance away. You hope that they weren't wrong on both counts. You sure could use a warm fire, a tasty dinner, and some stout drink to lift your spirits after this long, rainy journey.
>
> As you top the crest of a hill, you spot a town spread out before you. Smoke drifting up from the chimneys carries the aroma of venison, causing your stomachs to growl with anticipation. You notice a crowd gathered in the center of town. Although from this distance nothing except occasional shouts can be heard, it seems that the crowd is excited.

As the PCs approach the village, they hear scattered comments from the crowd, including statements like: "Never trusted 'em sneaky dwarves," "They had trouble written all over them," and "We should've chased 'em off when we first laid eyes on 'em." The crowd seems to be on the verge of violence. The villagers eye any PC dwarves suspiciously, and they make no effort to conceal their comments. If the PCs ask what is going on, an old man approaches them and tells the following story.

> "Oh, it's terrible, me lords. All of them are gone. What shall become of me? It was 'em dwarves I tell ya. Those greedy thieves. It was awful. If I hadn't hid, I'd be dead too. We need to go look for 'em. I tell ya, we need to make 'em pay. But what can I do? I'm just an old blacksmith. But Lord Baylon was so good to me, and I feel I must do somethin'. What can I do?"

The old man continues on like this until the PCs interrupt him. If the PCs ask him some questions, they can find out that the old man's name is Gunthar and that he was the blacksmith at Lord Baylon's manor. Apparently, the manor was attacked last night by a band of dwarves seen recently in the area, and Gunthar is a witness to the attack. If questioned, he tells this story:

Gunthar was working in his smithy when heard a noise. When he looked up from the forge, he saw a "typical, short, grubby dwarf" standing in the doorway. Then everything went dark and he was knocked unconscious. Gunthar awoke only a few hours ago and searched the grounds for survivors, but couldn't get into the manor house itself. However, he did discover the corpses of the manor's servants.

The villagers were deciding what to do about the raid when the PCs arrived. Now the solution to the problem seems at hand. Within a few minutes, the PCs are approached by a tall, middle-aged man who asks to speak with them privately. He introduces himself as Vorcan, the mayor. He asks that the PCs go up to the manor and find out what happened to Lord Baylon and his family. As payment, he offers honorary citizenship in Safehearth, free room and board now and whenever the PCs are in the area (including stabling and feed for the party's horses), and 10 gp per PC. Vorcan can be talked into increasing this amount to a total of 20 gp per PC but can offer no more, as this would bankrupt the town treasury. If pressed for more money, Vorcan offers to send a letter to the duke describing the PCs' help and requesting that the party be rewarded for its efforts.

If the PCs agree to help, they are given free rooms in the local inn, fed whatever they can eat and drink, and treated like honored guests. When the villagers awake the PCs before sunrise, their horses stand ready to go, with food and drink provided in the horses' packs. Vorcan is present to wish them luck and to point them along a trail that winds off to the northeast.

If the PCs think to ask, most of the villagers can provide a description of the dwarves suspected in this treachery. The PCs may recognize the suspects as the dwarves and gnome that they met along the trail to Safehearth. The PCs may decide to backtrack and find the dwarves instead of investigating the manor house. If the PCs express this desire to Vorcan, he attempts to persuade them to search the manor house first, but he will not discourage them from following their own course of action.

Mistaken Identity

If the PCs track down the dwarves suspected of raiding the manor, they can find them at the same place where they camped earlier. The dwarves invite the PCs to sit and to share their meal. They have caught several large rabbits, and they have more food than they can eat in three meals.

The dwarves will be surprised to hear about the raid, since this area is usually very quiet, with little trouble. If the PCs accuse the dwarves of committing this heinous act, they plead their inno-

cence. They state that they are prospecting, searching for a new mine site. The dwarves know the manor and its location, because they passed through town a week ago.

If threatened or accused, the dwarves and the gnome all produce holy symbols of Muamman Duathal, the dwarven deity of "protection" (see *Monster Mythology* for details). The symbol is a mace held in gauntleted hands. A dwarf or any PC with the religion proficiency will immediately recognize it and can tell the party about Muamman's protective nature. The dwarves are opposed to violence, except in defense, and would never attack the manor.

Hopefully, the PCs will realize that these dwarves did not raid the manor house. The encounter is not designed to end in melee, but it should make the adventurers ask, "If the dwarves didn't commit this crime, who did?" However, if the PCs are too quick to attack, or if they don't believe the dwarves, the heroes could be in for a fight.

If the PCs attack, the dwarves surround the gnome and protect him while he casts spells. Galinexal, the illusionist/thief, casts a *hold person* spell on three PCs to remove them from the combat. Next he casts a *charm person* spell; if the spell is successful, the gnome encourages the *charmed* PC to protect the dwarves. Beyond this point, Galinexal's spell use depends on what the PCs are doing. If they are a serious threat, Galinexal casts his *spook* and *spectral force* spells. If the PCs are not a serious threat, he uses his *improved phantasmal force* spells to assist his comrades.

During this time, the dwarves attack the PCs with the flat edges of their weapons, attempting to overbear or wrestle the PCs. Their leader, Daggan, uses spells such as *hold person* and *command* to immobilize the opposition without causing injury. The dwarves have no desire to seriously hurt the party. If any dwarf is gravely injured, the dwarves all surrender and aid their wounded comrade.

The defeated dwarves can be convinced (or coerced) to go to Safehearth and plead their case before Vorcan. After they tell their story, Gunthar confirms that the dwarves do not look like the villains who raided the manor. Vorcan offers his sincerest apologies to the dwarves, and they are allowed to leave.

Despite this, the PCs will have made enemies. The dwarves do not pursue a vendetta against the PCs, but they do spread the word that the PCs are an unsociable bunch who would rather fight than be civilized. This talk, coupled with the dwarves' good behavior and liberal spending, gives the PCs a bad reputation among the villagers. The heroes will be denied any special favors or services in the nearby towns. They find all the inns are full, dinners and equipment cost more, and the respect they normally receive has vanished. The full extent and duration of this bad reputation are up to the DM.

If the PCs believe the dwarves are innocent, Daggan and his followers insist on returning to Safehearth to profess their innocence to the town. However, once they have cleared their names, they do not help the party explore the manor.

Daggan (dwarf leader): AL NG; AC 3; MV 6; F7/C7; hp 54; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 12, C 17, I 9, W 14, Ch 12; ML 16; *splint mail +1, footman's mace +1*, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

Spells: *bless, command, protection from evil, purify food and drink, sanctuary; hold person, lighten load* (from *Tome of Magic*), *spiritual hammer; dispel magic, meld into stone; tongues.*

Galinexal (gnome): AL CG; AC 6; MV 6; I5/T6; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 18, C 13, I 17, W 11, Ch 13; PP 60%, OL 55%, FT 50%, MS 80%, HS 65%, DN 40%, CW 70%, RL 25%; ML 14; *studded leather armor +1, dagger +1*, short bow, thieves' picks.

Spells: *audible glamer, charm person, detect magic, spook, ventriloquism; improved phantasmal force* (×2), *mirror image; hold person, spectral force.*

Trundar (dwarf): AL CG; AC 5; MV 6; F4; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2 or 1/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/16, D 8, C 18, I 9, W 7, Ch 9; ML 14; chain mail, broad sword (specialized), heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

Cornym (dwarf): AL NG; AC 5; MV 6; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 1/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 11, C 15, I 12, W 10, Ch 10; ML 14; chain mail, battle axe, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, hand axe.

Therious (dwarf): AL CG; AC 5; MV 6; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2 or 1/2;

Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 14, C 16, I 13, W 7, Ch 8; ML 13; scale mail, shield, short sword (specialized), heavy crossbow with 20 bolts.

Baylon Manor

Once the PCs are on their way to the manor, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you travel, the trail levels out. The hills are farther apart, the woods are thinning, and travel is becoming easier. You have been traveling for about 30 minutes, and you should arrive at the manor soon.
>
> As you turn a corner, you notice a small bridge spanning a brook. Across the brook, you see plowed fields as well as a well-tended grove of apple and pear trees. It seems that you have reached your destination. Making your way through the fields, you can see a small outlying brick building, obviously the smithy, as well as a barn and corral. You notice several horse carcasses lying within the fence. Apparently the animals were killed during the raid. In the distance stands a large, single-story building, obviously the manor house.

The PCs have reached Baylon Manor. The smithy is not detailed here, as there is nothing special about it. The dead horses, however, are a clue. Ordinary bandits would have stolen the horses, not slaughtered them. If the PCs do not realize this, allow fighter or thief PCs to make an Intelligence check to catch the clue.

As the PCs approach the house, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you examine the manor house itself, you notice that its beams are made from the sturdy oak trees common to this region. The glass windows are covered by iron grates. No lights shine from within, and the windows are too dusty to see through clearly. A set of large double doors in the south wall is probably the main entrance. In addition, there are three smaller, nondescript doors in the east wall. Two chimneys rise from the roof, one each on the south and north walls.

Before the PCs can begin their investigation, they must gain entry to the house. The two northeast doors are unlocked, but they do not lead into the main house (see areas 2 and 3). The double doors in the south wall are locked from within by excellent-quality locks (−20% penalty to thieves pick-locks rolls). The southeast door is locked also, but with only an ordinary lock. The PCs may also enter through the windows if they remove the grates. This requires a Strength of 21; however, two PCs may work together to pry the bars apart. There is not enough space for more than two PCs to work on each window.

1. Foyer.

> This 10′ × 10′ room is shrouded in darkness, the only light coming in from outside through the open doorway. On the east and west walls, extinguished torches still sit in their sconces. The floor is covered in fine wool carpeting. Opposite the entrance, a large ornate archway leads farther into the house. The peak of the archway is decorated with the symbol of an owl on a banner draped from a spear. The frame around the archway is made of expensive teak. Along the north wall, on either side of the arch, hang several fine capes and cloaks.

If the PCs search the room, they find nothing remarkable. The cloaks hanging from the pegs on the wall belonged to the Baylon family. They are of good quality, worth around 1 gp each. The torches in the sconces are still usable. Each will burn for 20 minutes.

2. Dining Room.

> The centerpiece of this large room is a beautiful black marble table surrounded by six large oak chairs upholstered in red velvet. Two sofas and a table stand before a large stone fireplace set in the north wall. The sofas are upholstered in the same fine velvet as the oak chairs. Along the east and west walls, four unlit torches are set in sconces. The floor is covered in the same fine carpeting as the foyer. Over the fireplace hangs a painting depicting proud parents and two sons.

The painting depicts Lord Baylon and his family while his sons were still young. The younger son has since left the manor to study as an acolyte in the duke's chapel. The large marble table was a gift from the duke in gratitude for Lord Baylon's faithful service. It weighs several tons and is impossible for the PCs to move without magical assistance. The table is polished to a highly reflective shine and is obviously worth a large sum. All the torches and the fireplace were lit during the raid, but the dark creepers used their *darkness* ability to extinguish them.

3. Servants' Quarters.

> This is obviously a servants' room. It contains only a bunk bed, a small dresser, a small unlit lantern, and a corpse.

The manor's cook and maidservant were killed in the southern room. The young man in the northern room was the stableboy. Gunthar, the blacksmith, also lived here, but he was not in his quarters when the dark creepers struck.

There is nothing of value in either of these rooms; they have been thoroughly ransacked. The lanterns not of standard adventuring quality, but they may be used by the PCs if needed. Each contains enough oil to burn for 6d20 (6-120) minutes. The lanterns were lit at the start of the raid, but they were extinguished by the dark creepers' *darkness* ability.

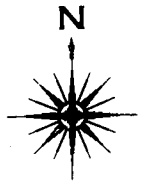
4. Pantry.

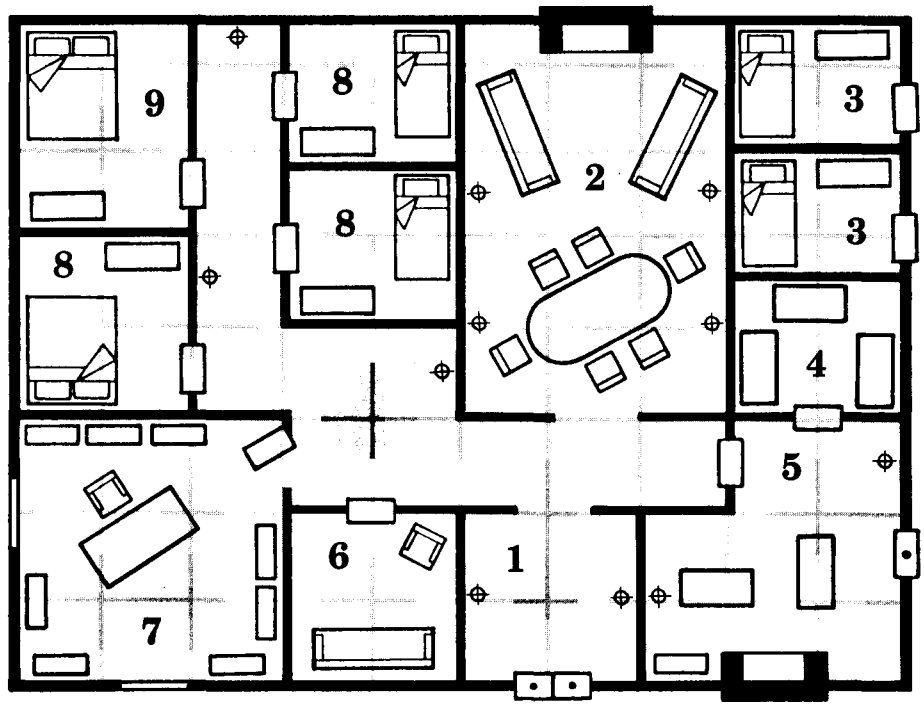
> This room contains shelves that hold various foods in glass jars and crates. Broken jars of fruits and vegetables are strewn on the floor, and the room smells heavily of vinegar. There are several empty crates in the northwest corner, and a large patch of white powder covers the floor in the southwest corner. In the opposite corner, a loop of rope runs up through the floor.

This room was used to store staples and items that don't require storage in the cool air of the cellar. Most of the food here has been pickled, thus the heavy scent of vinegar. The white powder on the floor is flour. If the PCs inspect the rope in the northeast corner, they find a trap door set in the floor. They also notice many sets of small muddy footprints near the trap door.

Baylon Manor

1 square = 5′





When the PCs open the trap door, a cool draft rises from below. A ladder leads down about 12′ into the cellar. Any PCs with exceptional hearing, or who have lived underground for most of their lives, can also hear the light gurgling of an underground stream. The muddy footprints are an obvious clue to where the raiders may have entered the house.

5. Kitchen.

This room is in a total state of disarray. White powder has been thrown all over the floor and trampled by many sets of footprints. All of the shelves have been dumped onto the floor. Along the south wall stands a fireplace used for cooking. There are two marble basins along the east wall as well as torches and sconces along the east and west walls. The tables in the center of the room have been overturned, and their legs have been hacked off. While there is no sign of battle, obviously this room was not spared during the raid.

The white powder is flour. Cooking utensils, pots, and pans have been thrown everywhere, and smashed ceramic dishes cover the floor. If the adventurers check the fireplace, they discover that the coals are still warm. This fire wasn't extinguished during the raid; it burned out by itself. PCs examining the door into the pantry (area 4) or the lock on the east door discover several sets of muddy handprints left behind by the dark creepers. The mud has dried but is still visible.

6. Sitting Room.

This room is filled with the same high-quality furnishings as the dining room. An ornate, unlit lantern sits on a small table, and the heavy smell of tobacco lingers in the room. A small box has been pushed under the table.

The box under the table contains several pipes and some tobacco. The lantern is fancy but fragile. It is worth 30 gp. Both the sofa and chair have the same red velvet upholstery as in the dining room (area 2). There is nothing of great value in this room other than the lantern and the tobacco (worth around 10 gp on the market).

7. Library.

The door to this room is open, and you can see a body within. Several enormous bookcases line the walls, and a large desk occupies the center of the room. Two bronze lanterns sit on the desk, unlit. The room is lit by two windows, one each in the south and west walls.

The body of an elderly gentleman is lying behind the desk, with a book open on the desk before it. Opposite the desk, under a small pile of ashes, you see the glint of metal.

The body was Lord Baylon, killed here trying to fend off the assault of the dark creepers. Although he was quickly blinded by darkness, he managed to slay one of his attackers before succumbing. The dark creeper's remains are the pile of ashes in front of the desk. Lord Baylon slew the creature with his family heirloom, a *short sword of quickness*. However, he was startled by the spontaneous explosion of the dark creeper

and was overwhelmed and killed by a group of its fellows. The sword was taken below by the dark creepers.

The metallic object is the dark creeper's dagger. It is nonmagical and ordinary in every way, but it is the only item that survived the dark creeper's immolation.

The open book on the desk is Lord Baylon's personal journal, in which he recorded the household accounts and proceeds from the sale of livestock. All the books on the shelves are ordinary and deal with politics, economics, and military tactics. The lanterns are not lit and are ordinary in every way. The upper right desk drawer contains a key to the wine cellar (area 11).

8. Bedrooms. There are only minor differences in the contents of each of these three rooms. Each of the two rooms on the east side of the hallway contains a small bed; the west room contains a large one. Each of the rooms is furnished with a dresser and two lanterns. The northeast room is in total disarray. It was the scene of a struggle between Lord Baylon's older son, Maxston, and the dark creepers. Since both lanterns were smashed during the struggle, the room strongly smells of oil. Fortunately, the lanterns had been extinguished by the dark creepers as soon as they were spotted. If they had been lit, the whole house would have probably gone up in flames.

A small mound of ashes like those in the library is piled outside the door. These are the remains of a dark creeper who learned about Maxston's *magic missile* spell the hard way. However, Maxston is only an apprentice magician with little formal training, and this was his only spell. Maxston was easily subdued after a short struggle, and he was captured and taken below.

The rooms contain nothing of value except for the silk bedclothes in the west room, usually used as a guest room. The bedding may be sold for 15 gp.

9. Master Bedroom. Lord Baylon's wife was murdered in this room, which is now the lair of a phantom created from the trauma of Mistress Baylon's murder. When the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> As you enter this room, you are startled to see a middle-aged woman lying in bed. As she turns to look at you, two short, dark figures come running into the room. The woman's face twists with fear, and you are suddenly surrounded by darkness. You feel several beings run past you toward the bed. A piercing scream cuts you to the bone. After the sounds of a short struggle, you hear one final pitiful wail. Finally, there is nothing but silence.

Each PC must make a saving throw vs. death magic with a −2 penalty. PCs who fail their saving throws panic and flee as if affected by a *fear* spell, with a 60% chance of dropping whatever they are holding (−5% per level above 1st). Affected PCs flee for 1d12 rounds at their maximum Movement Rate. If affected for more than 3 rounds, the PCs will flee from the manor house. In any case, any PC struck by fear cannot approach within 30′ of this room without making another saving throw vs. death magic, this one with no modifier.

Read the following to the players whose PCs successfully made their saving throws:

> The darkness immediately disappears. You now see the woman's corpse on the floor. The woman appears to have been dead for at least one day. There is no sign of what caused the scene you just witnessed. An open chest stands along the south wall, and the contents of a dresser have been dumped onto the floor.

The dark creepers entered this room searching for the magical items they detected here. When they found Falicia Baylon, they killed her to facilitate their thievery. They dumped out the dresser looking for Lord Baylon's *ring of mind shielding* and took his *shield +2* out of the chest. The dark creepers then returned to their lair to add up their loot.

The phantom in this room is physically harmless to the PCs but has a strong psychological effect. The scenes above occur half the time when the PCs enter the room, or until eliminated by a *remove curse* spell cast by a 12th-level or higher priest.

Phantom: INT nil; AL N; AC nil; MV 9; HD nil; hp nil; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA fear; MR special; SZ M; ML nil; XP nil; MM/287.

Nothing of value remains in the room except a pouch of 243 gp in the bottom of the chest.

10. Cellar. Entry to this room is through the trap door in the pantry (area 4). This cool room was used to store perishable goods. The room's chill is due to the underground stream whose cold water flows swiftly through the southwest corner. The ladder leading down from the pantry is slick with moisture but not too hazardous. Several small barrels in the cellar contain cheese and meat. The door leading into the wine storage (area 11) is locked, and the key is in Lord Baylon's desk (area 7). When the PCs enter the cellar, read the following to the players (if the PCs have brought in a light source):

> Without your lights, it would be pitch black down here, and the air is chilly. The whole south wall has been replaced by an open, hinged grating, behind which flows an underground stream. Small barrels are piled about the room, and there is a door in the east wall. The floor is covered with many small, muddy footprints that all lead out of the water, apparently from the southeast.

The footprints indicate where the villains came from. If the PCs enter the water they will have some trouble moving upstream because the ceiling is low. Any PC under 4′ tall has little trouble negotiating this passage. Larger PCs, however, must crawl through this passage, making combat impossible. Fortunately, there is nothing to fight in this area—yet!

11. Wine Storage. Several old vintages of wine are kept here, as well as kegs of brandy and rum. The contents of the room could be sold for 100 gp total. Other than the wine and spirits, there is nothing of interest in this room.

It's Always Darkest Just Before . . .

This section describes the underground lair of the dark creepers. It is a straightforward cave crawl with a few difficulties thrown in. The PCs' main opponents here are not the physically weak dark creepers. Rather, darkness and sensory deprivation are the main challenges. Weaker parties may have a

hard time surviving the combat in this section. If this is the case, the DM should reduce the number of dark creepers to make it less daunting.

The cave floors are smooth, carved by the stream over the course of several centuries. The floor is now dry because the stream's water level has dropped over the past decade. The dark creepers moved in only six days ago through a natural chimney in what is now the dark stalker's lair (area 16). However, they have already made themselves at home by transplanting several shriekers in the entrance tunnel (area 12) as well as creating *darkness* in the cave system. The shriekers' detection range is marked on the map.

There are no area descriptions to read to the players since, for the most part, it will be too dark for the PCs to see. If a description is needed, all of the caves are ordinary with a few visual quirks. Be creative!

12. Cave Entrance. When the PCs enter this area, all of their nonmagical light sources are extinguished by the dark creepers' *darkness* spells. If the PCs are using magical light, the *darkness* is dispelled automatically. As soon as the *darkness* is dispelled by magical light, or when the PCs get within 10' of the three shriekers, the monsters start shrieking. The noise draws five dark creepers from the larger area of the cave.

The creepers first extinguish any remaining light sources with their *darkness* ability. Then they surround the party and attempt to backstab them while the heroes are busy dealing with the shriekers. While the battle rages, one additional dark creeper moves to the other caves (areas 13, 14, and 16) to warn the remaining dark creepers and their leader, the dark stalker Morag, about the intruders. All the dark creepers attack with normal daggers.

Shriekers (3): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 17, 12, 9; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; MM/120-121 (Fungus).

Dark creepers (5): INT average; AL CN; AC 2 (10); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8, 6 (×2), 5, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon type; SA *darkness, detect magic*, thief abilities, blinding flash; SD *darkness*; SZ S; ML 12; XP 120; MC14.

Each dark creeper has 1-2 gems worth 1d100 gp plus 1d20 sp or cp (50% chance of either).

13. Main Lair. This cave is the lair of 12 dark creepers, so the living conditions are very cramped.

Several beds of rags and such are spread throughout this room. The uncertain footing requires each PC involved in combat here to make a Dexterity check every round. Those who fail their checks trip over some item and end up on the floor. Any PC who falls to the floor is subject to the following penalties: Opponents get +4 to their attack rolls; PC loses all shield bonuses to armor class; PC must spend the next attack to stand back up, or continue to fight from this position with a −4 penalty to attack rolls.

As soon as the PCs enter the room, the dark creepers attack. The six *darkness* spells covering areas 13-16 must be dispelled individually by the PCs if they want to see. However, the dark creepers use their *darkness* ability to keep the area dark. The PCs will probably be in darkness (see the rules governing darkness on page 119 of the *DMG*). After the third round of combat, the other dark creepers and their leader Morag enter the battle from areas 14 and 16, attempting to surprise the PCs by striking from the rear.

The dark stalker uses his *wall of fog* spell as necessary to hinder the PCs, and directs attacks against any obvious magic-using PCs. The dark stalker directs the action as long as possible, trying all the while to stay out of combat. If seriously threatened, he orders all his followers to overwhelm the PCs, and he flees down the chimney (in area 16) to escape.

If Morag is attacked and seriously wounded, all the dark creepers must make morale checks. Those that fail their checks flee to avoid the *fireball* effect of the dark stalker's death.

Dark creepers (12): INT average; AL CN; AC 2 (10); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 9, 8 (×2), 7 (×3), 6 (×2), 5, 4, 3 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon type; SA *darkness, detect magic*, thief abilities, blinding flash; SD *darkness*; SZ S; ML 12; XP 120; MC14.

Each dark creeper has 1-2 gems worth 1d100 gp, plus 1d20 cp or sp (50% chance of either). There is a 5% chance for each dark creeper to have 1-2 gems worth 2d100 gp. One dark creeper has a *ring of mind shielding* buried beneath the rotten layers of its clothing.

14. Spoils Room. The dark creepers use this room to store their ill-gotten goods, and their booty is spread out all over the cave.

Eight dark creepers, Morag's elite guard, make their beds among the piles of goods. These individuals are the strongest dark creepers of the group, and Morag has recognized the advantage of using them as shock troops. If fighting breaks out in the main lair (area 13), these individuals arrive three rounds later to help repel the intruders.

Dark creepers (8): INT average; AL CN; AC 2 (10); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 9 (×6), 8 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1, Dmg 1-4 or by weapon type; SA *darkness, detect magic*, thief abilities, blinding flash; SD *darkness*; SZ S; ML 14; XP 120; MC14.

These dark creepers are armed with short swords, except for one who uses a *dagger +1*. They each have 1d2 200-500 gp gems plus 2d20 gp.

Most of the treasure in this room is worthless. Many crates of food taken from the manor house are stacked everywhere, but they are all thoroughly picked over. A bolt of silk in one corner serves as a bed for one of the occupants. In addition, bits of broken armor and weapons are spread throughout the area. If the PCs spend several hours searching through this trash, they can recover 543 gp, 2,540 sp, and over 35,000 cp. In addition they can find 1d10 gems ranging in value from 1d10 gp to 100-1,000 gp each.

15. Prison. A small niche behind the boulder currently houses the dark creepers' sole prisoner, Lord Baylon's son Maxston, who was captured during the raid. The dark creepers subdued him and brought him along after he killed one of their number with a *magic missile* spell. The dark creepers believe that Maxston is a powerful wizard and want him to create many magical items for them. Maxston, however, can't understand what the dark creepers are demanding in their incomprehensible language. Even if Maxston could be made to understand, he is only a lowly apprentice wizard and doesn't have the ability to create magical items.

Maxston has not been fed during his captivity and is still weak from the ordeal of the raid. If he is found, or if he hears the PCs' voices, he begs for rescue.

Maxston: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12 (6); W1; hp 3 (1); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 11, C 13 (8), I 14, W 10, Ch 14; ML 6. Maxston's current statistics are in parentheses.

16. Dark Stalker's Lair. This cave is the home of the dark stalker Morag and his entourage. The cave is spacious, and there are only three beds in this area. The large pile of rags in the northernmost corner belongs to Morag. Buried in this pile are his personal weapons: Lord Baylon's *short sword of quickness*, a *shield +2*, and a *wand of flame extinguishing*. He retrieves these items before entering combat in the main lair (area 13).

Stashed in the northwest niche is Morag's personal treasure. This cache consists of a *dagger +1*, a potion of *plant control*, and one burned-out wand (previously a *wand of fire*, now totally drained). In addition to the magical items, there are two diamonds worth 750 gp and 500 gp, and 1,700 gp in various coins, including some minted in the Underdark.

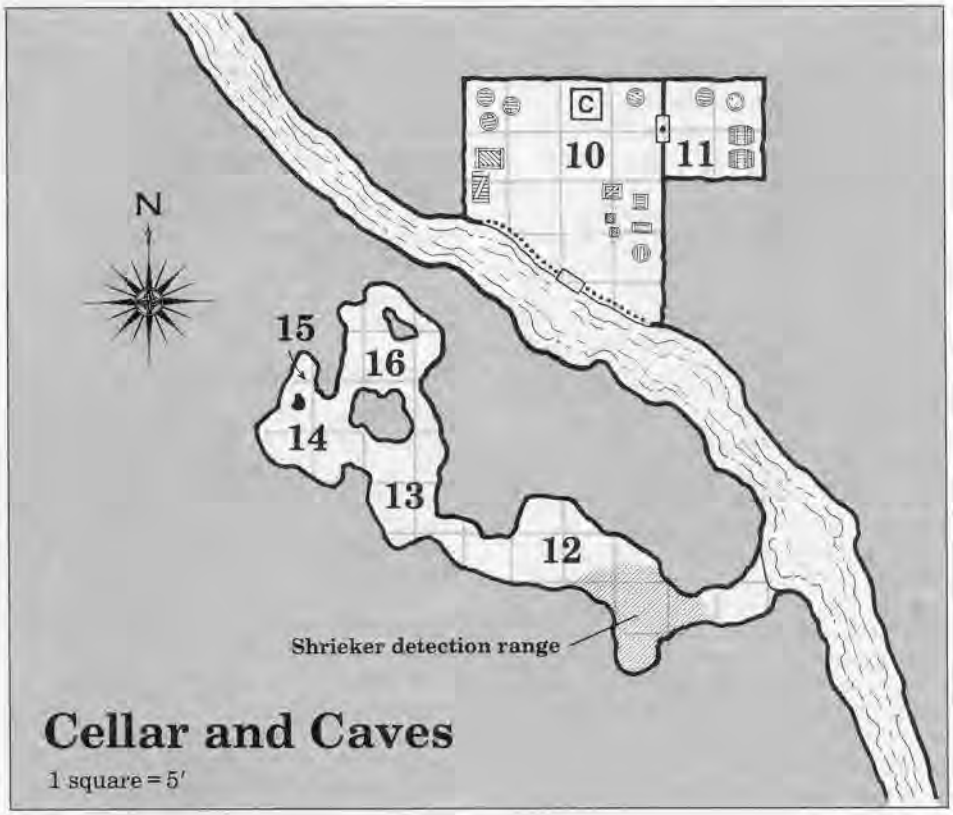
Two dark creepers guard Morag. After three rounds of combat in the main lair (area 13), Morag emerges to direct any remaining dark creepers. If seriously threatened, he retreats down the chimney, taking with him any treasure he can salvage.

Dark creepers (2): INT average; AL CN; AC 2 (10); MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8, 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon type; SA *darkness, detect magic*, thief abilities, blinding flash; SD *darkness*; SZ S; ML 12; XP 120; MC14.

Morag, dark stalker: INT average; AL CN; AC 2 (10); MV 9; HD 2+1; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA *darkness, wall of fog, fireball* upon death; SD *darkness, wall of fog*; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC14.

Morag led his followers up from the Underdark into this cave after he carried out an attack on a drow wizard four weeks ago. Although he acquired his wand from this mage, he also received a death warrant issued by the deceased drow's relatives. Morag decided that it was smarter to move on rather than take on more drow. After all, he had lost five of his followers to a single drow mage. How many would he lose to a prepared drow war party?

Morag has been trying to persuade Maxston to make the magical items he needs to protect himself when he returns to the Underdark. It is fortunate that Maxston cannot understand the dark stalker's requests, because Morag will slay the young wizard as soon as it becomes clear that Maxston has no ability to enchant items.



Morag is intelligent and will recognize when the tide of the battle has turned against him. He is a firm believer that the strong (and stupid) stand and fight, while the smart get going while the going is good. He avoids entering combat, preferring to have his minions fight (and die) for him.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs find Maxston and return him to the surface, he will be extremely grateful. He allows the PCs to keep any magical items taken from the dark creepers, including his father's shield, sword, and ring. After his health returns, Maxston writes the duke a letter requesting that the PCs be invited to the capital to be honored. Soon afterward, Maxston moves to the capital and becomes apprenticed to the court mage. One month later, the PCs are approached by a knight who requests that the PCs accompany him to the capital for an audience with the duke. The knight will not be pleased if the PCs refuse this offer.

The villagers of Safehearth stick to their agreement and treat the PCs as heroes. After all, they did save the last remaining member of the Baylon family. The adventurers are showered with small country gifts for their efforts: fine wood for making bows and arrows, various dried meats and cheeses, new pairs of deerskin boots for all the PCs, and so on. If the PCs performed exceptionally well and are looking for a new base of operations, they can convince the duke to allow them to live in and maintain Baylon Manor. This allows the DM to introduce the politics of land ownership into the campaign. When the PCs are powerful enough, they may even be granted dominion over the manor and village as the duke's vassal.

If the PCs fail, Morag and his dark creepers may return to plague the village. They take over the manor house and cast it into eternal darkness, using it as a base to raid the village. The villagers send for the PCs to eliminate the menace once and for all. Of course, if the PCs go down the chimney (in area 16) to chase the survivors, they may be caught in a new campaign in the Underdark. Ω

Continued from page 7

the objections to so-called 19th-century technology are really unfounded.

As an M.A. student of the history of science, I have learned that many inventions we think of as belonging to one age were anticipated in an earlier era. (I hasten to add that even official AD&D products, like *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue,* recognize this—viz. the "flying machine" reminiscent of machines that Leonardo da Vinci sketched.) The history of technology records the existence of what is almost certainly a proto-steam engine in late antiquity, used perhaps only to open temple doors for worshipers while theatrically belching awe-inspiring steam. Not important enough a use to be remembered, perhaps, so its secret was lost. My point?

There is no reason why any society in a given fantasy world has to parallel ours in the sequence of development and application of science or technology. I'd also bet that, while the steam engine is a problem for some, most campaigns out there use concepts of hygiene and developments in public sanitation (extensive sewer systems) totally alien to even western European society before Semmelweis, Koch, and Chadwick, who were not around until the 19th century.

Mr. Scott is undoubtedly familiar with the science-fiction subgenre of alternate timelines. Many such stories emphasize political differences, the results of battles lost or won. Think instead about the differences one light of knowledge not extinguished might have made. In our world, there was no reason, for example, why western ecclesiasts should be impressed by the engineering of Islamic minarets, and therefore inspired to build gothic cathedrals, only to ignore other achievements of the same Moorish society. So some advances had to wait for the 19th century instead of arriving in the 12th or 13th century. In AD&D worlds, almost anything should be possible. If there can be a giant's castle in the sky, why not a dwarven railway in some small corner of the multiverse?

But while Mr. Scott is free to avoid all anachronisms in his campaign, it's fun to have a few around now and then. I know my players don't want to wallow in the decidedly unheroic filth of a realistic western medieval city's alleys; they even like streetlamps after dark. Including anachronistic elements seems to me a fresh approach and a great source of new possibilities for play. Kudos to Mr. Ides and DUNGEON magazine. I turn to the pages of DUNGEON magazine often, for *different* ideas, and I hope to continue to see something new under the sun.

P.S. Lasers next? It's already been done. Remember S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*?

Steven F. Baljkas
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Scarred for Life

I have been playing D&D® and AD&D games since 1976. I am both an ardent player and calculating Dungeon Master. Your magazine has been a great boon to me as a DM, but I must comment on a recurrent game theme that I find distressing.

It seems that almost every beautiful and friendly female encountered by an adventuring party is either a thief, a trap, or an evil monster in disguise. Some examples from DUNGEON #45 are Leishan (page 32), the bar-lgura (page 63), and Irinia (page 68). It has become such a TSR cliche that, on the mere mention of an attractive, enticing female, my players shout rapidly and in unison, "Kill, fireball, poison arrow, grenade," etc.

All of my adult players, and myself, are emotionally scarred for life. It may not be too late for the younger, more impressionable players. Please try to refrain from describing beautiful women in the future, or at least deploy them in a more egalitarian fashion. Could it really be possible that an attractive female would ever honestly be interested in a beleaguered party of adventurers?

Louis LaMancusa
Metairie, Louisiana

More Monster Information Needed

I am writing concerning a major problem: the lack of information provided in DUNGEON magazine about obscure monsters from this plane and others. In "Deadly Treasure" (issue #41), for example, the dungeon is built in another plane and populated with that plane's inhabitants. Most of the monsters, like the chasme and the farastu gehreleth, are listed in *Monstrous Compendium*® 8 (whatever that is). I don't have it, and I know nothing about these creatures other than what is listed. I'm not asking for a full page, but a brief listing of combat details and anything else that could affect play would be helpful. Monsters in *Monstrous Compendium* 1 and 2 should be common enough not to require this, but I don't have the money or resources to buy every single supplement TSR produces. Other than that, and the issue brought up by Christopher Putnam in issue #43, "Deadly Treasure" has to be one of the best-crafted adventures I've seen. The part about the falling building made me shudder with anticipation. Nice work, Coby Hedberg.

I would also like to voice my opinion on several issues. First, I'd like to thank the editors for choosing so many regular AD&D adventures in the past few issues. They'll all come in handy, and I'd like to see this continue.

Second, I think that psionics should be gotten rid of in all AD&D adventures. It's just too powerful and complicated to be used well and keep the balance of the game even. I have never played with psionics and I don't plan to use them. I do have a question, though. When a DM runs a monster with psionics but doesn't use them, what percentage of the listed experience points should the PCs receive?

Third, I would like to see more "physical" adventures. I'm not asking for a "hack-and-slash" adventure, but all the plot does is make for interesting reading for the DM. Too many times, the players need to be told afterward what was going on in the adventure regarding the plot. I just need to give the players a place and a reason to adventure. When I DM for my brothers, they get very frustrated when forced to think (which is a little like real life for them). So, editors, give us more of what you are named for: Dungeons. After all, we told you in the survey that we like dungeons the best. That's why I like "Deadly Treasure" so much: little plot and lots of action.

Aaron "Electra" Gulledge
Newport Beach, California

When figuring out the experience points to award when a DM doesn't use a monster's psionic ability, consult tables 31 and 32 on page 47 of the Dungeon Master Guide. *You can recreate the*

Continued on page 59

QUELKIN'S QUANDARY

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

When is an evil mage not an evil mage?

Artwork by David Day

Chris writes: "In one sense, 'Quelkin's Quandary' is akin to my earlier work, 'A Wizard's Fate' (issue #37). Both feature NPC wizards who are reputedly evil but are actually misunderstood. With so many evil wizards running around, it's nice to meet a few who don't foam at the mouth when casting a spell."

"Quelkin's Quandary" is an AD&D® adventure suitable for any campaign setting, although a temperate climate is suggested. The module is best played with 4-8 player characters of levels 3-5 (about 24 total levels). The PCs should possess roughly the same number of magical items as the NPC antagonists featured in this adventure (1-2 items per character) to maintain game balance.

Adventure Background

The adventure begins in the village of Carthington Cross. The DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players when the PCs are relaxing at the local pub:

> Having had your fill of adventures recently, you have come to the quiet village of Carthington Cross to indulge yourselves in its peace and tranquility. The village inn is congenial, its patrons are friendly, and the beds are soft and warm.
>
> In the evening, you share wild tales with the locals. They seem to envy your exciting lifestyle, but they are not without their own adventures. One popular story involves an evil wizard named Quelkin who occupies a house in the nearby hills. Two years ago, he unleashed a terrible monster on Carthington Cross—half bear, half owl, with a voracious appetite. It required nearly the entire village population to subdue the creature, even with the assistance of three brave visitors from a distant city.
>
> Following the owlbear incident, several villagers, including the mayor, stormed through the woods to Quelkin's manor and demanded a formal apology. In the squabble that ensued, unkind words were exchanged, and the wizard uttered a spell that turned the mayor's skin green and scaly. According to one local, it was hours before the poor mayor returned to his normal self!
>
> Few residents of Carthington Cross have met Quelkin face to face,

although the wizard's servant, Jethro, appears once a month to purchase supplies. The mage, it would seem, is too preoccupied with his own sinister experiments to invite guests to his manor, and Jethro appears unwilling to divulge any of his master's schemes. In fact, he has never spoken a word to anyone in the village—he simply pays for the supplies, climbs atop his horse, and departs without a word of gratitude. In many ways, he is as secretive and mysterious as his malevolent master.

The owlbear incident continues to generate many fond recollections. It seems the villagers miss—even crave—those days of "high adventure." As they continue to share their more mundane tales, you decide to get some sleep.

In the morning, you awaken to the rich aroma of eggs and ham cooking in the skillet. Once downstairs, you settle in at your favorite table and wait to be served. As the waitress pours your drinks, a frantic figure bursts into the tavern, his eyes darting wildly about. Everyone in the pub looks stunned, and someone whispers, "Quelkin!" A flagon drops to the floor, and your waitress scuttles off behind the bar.

The disheveled figure who enters the pub is indeed Quelkin. If the PCs take no offensive action against the mage, he spots them and hastily makes his way over to their table. It would seem that even notoriously evil wizards require assistance from time to time.

The infamous wizard looks panicked and out of breath. "Help me . . . attackers . . . home," he blurts out, collapsing on the edge of your table. His arm knocks your beverages flying as he pants and puffs and struggles to remain conscious. Instinctively, you help the aging man to a chair, into which he falls like a ragged old doll.

"I ran all the way from my manor," he pants. "I need your help. A terrible thing has happened. Could I . . . could I have a drink, please?" The nervous waitress pours a cup of water for the wizard, which you carefully place in his quivering hands. Several tense moments pass in silence before Quelkin again speaks.

"Last night, I was working late in my study when I heard a knock on the door downstairs. I thought it seemed peculiar that visitors would arrive so late in the evening, but my servant had already gone to open the door. I waited to hear who it was, but everything remained disconcertingly quiet. After several minutes, I heard two sets of footfalls nearing the door to my study. The door opened, revealing Jethro, my servant, and another man. The man was tall, lean of face, with a monocle in one eye. Without so much as introducing himself, he ordered me to surrender and turn over my spell books to him.

"Needless to say, I laughed. That's when the intruder drew forth a wand and pointed it at me. Despite the late hour, my reflexes enabled me to dodge its beam. Having exhausted most of my spells earlier in the day—divinations, experiments . . . that sort of thing—I had little means of defending myself from this unprovoked attack.

"By sheer luck, I had retained memory of two spells. The first spell enveloped the chamber in magical darkness, allowing me to make my way to the window. I used my second spell to drift from the window like a feather. Once my feet touched the ground, I fled into the woods nearby. Moments later, when I felt a sharp pain in my chest, and my legs suddenly buckled, I knew that my familiar, Sasha, had been killed. Having barely endured this loss, I ran from my manor and found myself here, looking for help.

"I know the people of Carthington Cross have little reason to trust or help me, particularly after that unfortunate owlbear incident. You must understand, its escape was unintentional. As for the incident with the mayor—things just got out of hand. But now I need someone to reclaim my manor. Without my spell books, I am virtually powerless. I cannot stand by and watch someone take all that I have worked for."

Until now, Quelkin has always been labeled an evil mage; in fact, he is neutral good. He is telling the truth about the owlbear incident. One of Quelkin's colleagues needed someone to look after the owlbear while his tower was being refurbished. Quelkin thought he'd do his fellow mage a charitable service. The homesick owlbear broke free of its magical leash and went on a rampage searching for its master. Although the creature was subdued peacefully, the citizens of Carthington Cross immediately accused poor Quelkin of malicious intent. Because he was a private man who rarely communed with the local villagers, Quelkin quickly became the target of exaggerated rumors and unfounded speculations.

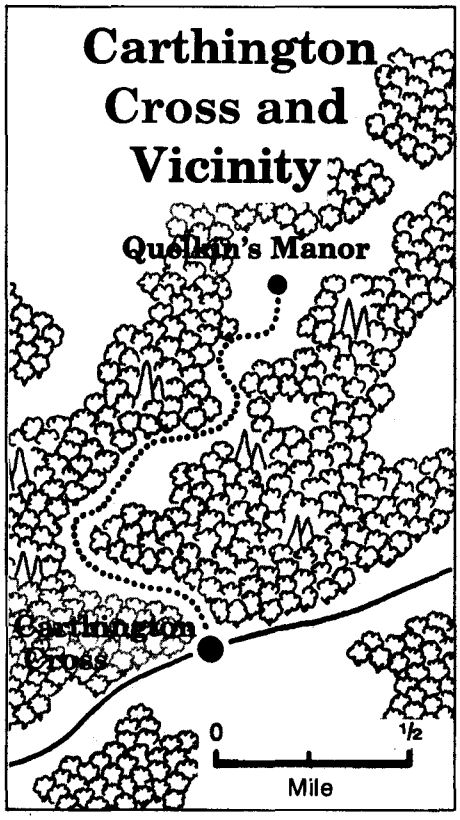
Quelkin refused to surrender himself into custody, claiming he had some delicate experiments that could not be left unattended (which was the truth). Annoyed by the villagers' growing anger and stubbornness, Quelkin used a cantrip to turn the mayor's skin green. With that, the villagers decided to leave the mage alone.

Quelkin is not a bane to Carthington Cross, but the NPC adventurers who raided Quelkin's manor certainly are. Led by an ambitious mage named Rastull, this marauding band heard the stories of Quelkin and figured no one would care if they rid the world of another evil mage. Rastull, of course, wanted Quelkin's spell books and magical items. Figuring he could not match spell power with Quelkin, Rastull brought along six additional NPCs to provide commensurate strength, stealth, and magical support.

The other NPCs of "Rastull's Regiment" include his apprentice, Aerzon; a pair of hired henchmen fighters named Marne and Ozwell; and three rogues named Lusk, Reltin, and Kett. Lusk and Reltin are members of a thieves' guild allied with Rastull (only Lusk is evil in alignment, however). Kett is a gypsy-bard searching for inspiration to write songs.

Upon arriving at the manor, Rastull ordered the fighters and rogues of his band to keep a watch on the manor exits and perimeter. Rastull and his apprentice then knocked on the door. When Jethro opened the door, Rastull *charmed* him using his *eye of charming* (worn as a monocle). Once inside, Rastull made his way up the manor stairs while his fighters searched the ground floor.

Quelkin managed to flee the manor using his wits and two spells: *darkness 15' radius* and *feather fall*. However, he neglected to mention to the PCs that, after landing outside the manor, he



encountered Lusk and seriously wounded the thief with several *magic missiles* (cast from his *ring of spell storing*). Quelkin is not generally a hostile person, but Lusk was certainly in no mood to pursue the wizard after that. Contrary to his earlier remarks, Quelkin still has some spells available to him (either memorized or stored in his ring), but they are mainly defensive in nature. (The rest of his spell complement was exhausted earlier that day while doing spell research.)

Lusk staggered back inside the manor to report Quelkin's escape. In revenge, Lusk then slew Quelkin's cat familiar. Luckily, Quelkin survived the shock of his familiar's death (but he lost one point of Constitution).

Although Rastull was planning to simply loot the manor and leave, he has taken a liking to the place and plans to settle in Quelkin's abode, at least temporarily. Using his newly acquired spell books, he may even terrorize Carthington Cross. He has yet to devote serious thought to the matter, but Rastull likes keeping his options open. Rastull and his band will still be at the manor if the PCs decide to venture there.

Quelkin encountered only two members of Rastull's Regiment (Rastull and Lusk) and does not know if there are others. If the party agrees to help Quelkin rid his manor of the unwelcome visitors, Quelkin will provide roughly sketched floor plans of the premises (the DM should create these as required, based on the map on page 25). Still frazzled from the experience, he will provide such maps only on request. While Quelkin is sketching the maps, the PCs have time to outfit themselves for the impending encounter. Quelkin himself remains in Carthington Cross, seeking pity from the good citizens at the pub (to little avail).

Quelkin: AL NG; AC 6; MV 12; W8; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 16, C 10 (formerly 11), I 18, W 12, Ch 14; ML 10; *cloak of protection +2, ring of spell storing* (with the spells *sleep, detect invisibility,* and *knock*). Spells remaining: *detect magic, protection from cantrips, tongues.*

Quelkin's *ring of spell storing* is invisible, and the wizard uses its spells sparingly (and secretly, if possible).

Quelkin will consider the party's reward only after the PCs rid his manor of Rastull and his cohorts (Quelkin has no idea how much money he has stashed away and relies on his servant, Jethro, to keep an eye on the funds). He does, however, promise to "make it worth your while." The reward Quelkin offers will depend on whether the PCs accomplish their task without damaging the manor and whether they can save Jethro. See "Concluding the Adventure" for details.

Quelkin's Manor

The journey to Quelkin's abode is uneventful if the adventurers stay on the road (those who stray from the path will encounter nothing more dangerous than a giant skunk or two). Once the PCs come within sight of the manor, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You follow an old road through the woods north of Carthington Cross. After a long and winding trek, you reach a hilltop clearing in which stands an odd yet well-kept manor of gray stone. Quelkin's home consists of a three-story tower and two single-story wings. The manor entrance is flanked by a tilted pair of smiling griffon statues embedded in the grass, and the walls are covered with creeping ivy. A weather vane squeaks noisily atop the slate roof, while the witchgrass and surrounding brush contribute to an overall sense of isolation.

If the PCs arrive at night, they see light emanating from several of the manor's windows and smoke rising from its chimneys. During the day, however, there are few signs to verify that the house is inhabited.

PCs who approach the manor from the front will be seen by Rastull's sharp-eyed weasel familiar, T'bubnik, who keeps watch through the south window of area 16 (directly above the manor's front entrance). If alerted to intruders, Rastull sends his apprentice, Aerzon, to warn the rest of his band. Each NPC has his own strategy for dealing with intruders. Nonevil NPCs may be coerced into switching sides (see page 23). The NPCs are well coordinated and will retreat to the third floor (areas 14-16) to make their final stand, if necessary.

Rastull's Regiment

Rastull and his band are mobile and not restricted to any room of the manor. Nevertheless, most NPCs remain in their particular areas, depending on the time. (See the sidebar on page 22.). Rastull expects that Quelkin might hire someone to retake the manor, so his band is still on alert (although the arrogant mage is not expecting any worthy opposition).

Rastull Fizzlewand, transmuter: AL NE; AC 8 (4 with *armor* spell); MV 12; W6; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 16, C 14, I 17, W 10, Ch 14; ML 13; XP 1,400; dagger, *wand of paralyzation* (eight charges; command word "wickstiff"), potion of *polymorph self* (two doses), *eye of charming* (worn as monocle).

Spells: *color spray, enlarge, shield, shocking grasp, spider climb; invisibility, pyrotechnics, rope trick; haste, hold person, wraithform.*

Rastull is tall and thin with hunched shoulders, a black two-pointed cap, and a long sallow face. His eyes burn with greed, and his purple robe hangs loosely on his slender frame. While staying at Quelkin's manor, Rastull keeps his spell book in the workroom (area 16).

Rastull already has an *armor* spell

cast on himself. If alerted to the presence of intruders, Rastull *enlarges* his familiar, transforming it into a giant weasel. He then assumes the shape of a bat (using his potion) and hangs inconspicuously from a rafter. Alternatively, he may cast his *invisibility* spell on himself. If any other NPCs are with Rastull, he uses his magic to conceal their presence as well.

When finally confronted, Rastull uses his *eye of charming* to *charm* anyone who meets his gaze (save at +2). He casts his *pyrotechnics* spell to blind any attackers, then follows up with his *hold person* spell or *wand of paralyzation* (taken from Quelkin's workroom). He saves his *haste* spell for Marne and Ozwell, the fighters in his band, doubling their number of attacks per round. Rastull reserves his *wraithform* spell (or the last dose of his potion) for escapes. His *rope trick* spell is particularly handy, as it can conceal the entire NPC party if necessary.

T'bubnik (weasel familiar): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD ½; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (1-2); SZ T (S); ML 11; XP 7; MM/241 (Mammal). Statistics in parentheses are for T'bubnik's *enlarged* form.

T'bubnik does not get along well with Aerzon's lizard familiar, Llue. The weasel typically remains on guard in the workroom (area 16), while the lizard usually dwells in the kitchen (area 5).

Aerzon, apprentice mage: AL N; AC 10 (6 with *armor* spell); MV 12; W2; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 8, D 12, C 11, I 16, W 10, Ch 11; ML 8; XP 175; dagger, potion of *invisibility* (one dose), *wand of dazzling* (13 charges; see details below). Spells: *phantasmal force, spider climb.*

Aerzon has an *armor* spell cast on himself (courtesy of Rastull) and keeps his *wand of dazzling* handy at all times. The wand is a special item crafted by Quelkin and taken from his workroom. The wand can create *dancing lights* (one charge per use), *color spray* (two charges per use), and *pyrotechnics* (fireworks only, three charges per use). The command words for the wand's powers are "solaria," "lumiere," and "blazefire" respectively.

Aerzon reserves his potion of *invisibility* for escape purposes. He is a mousy young man, slim of build, with oily black hair and shifty eyes. His robe is sewn with multiple pockets for his spell components. This apparel looks quite ridiculous and is poorly fitted.

Llue (young giant lizard familiar): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD ½; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 1; SZ T (1½' long); ML 8; XP 7; MM/226 (Lizard, modified). Aerzon recently acquired this familiar and is not aware that this creature will eventually grow to be 15' long.

Marne: AL N; AC 3; MV 9; F5; hp 39; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/23 (+1, +3), D 11, C 15, I 12, W 11, Ch 14; ML 12; XP 420; *chain mail +1, morning star +1* (specialized), shield, light crossbow, 15 bolts, 31 gp, 35 sp, and five 10-gp frost agates in pouch.

Marne relishes any opportunity to prove his fighting skills but does not partake in battles that are clearly not in his favor. He prefers one-on-one duels rather than fighting multiple adversaries, and will challenge any PC fighter who confronts him. Rastull pays Marne well for his loyalty, but Marne is not above switching sides if the price is right.

Ozwell: AL NG; AC 3; MV 9; F3; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16 (-, +1), D 14, C 16, I 9, W 9, Ch 10; ML 11; XP 120; plate mail, halberd, short sword, light crossbow, 12 bolts, three *bolts +1*, 18 gp and 21 sp in pouch.

Ozwell is Marne's fighting companion and loyal friend. The two were once members of The Flailing Eight, an adventuring party that disbanded after a treasure-sharing dispute. Ozwell is not especially fond of Rastull, but the evil wizard has so far proven himself to be a worthy ally. Ozwell would never perform an evil act by choice, but he sees nothing wrong with helping one evil mage overcome another evil mage (and he has taken Quelkin's reputation at face value).

Lusk: AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; T4; hp 9 (19 at full); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×2); S 11, D 17, C 15, I 12, W 11, Ch 8; ML 10; XP 270; PP 50%, OL 47%, FT 35%, MS 38%, HS 35%, DN 15%, CW 93%, RL 10%; leather armor, potion of *thievery* (adds two levels, 2d6+1 hp, and +8% to all thief abilities), *short sword of backstabbing +2* (wielder backstabs at four levels higher), 19 gp, and four 50-gp beryls in pouch. Lusk's magical items are fully described in the *Complete Thief's Handbook (CTH).*

Lusk is a vile individual, barely tolerated by the other members of Rastull's band but feared because of his cold, vindictive demeanor. His ultimate goal is to become guild master of the Dark Ring, a secret society of thieves. Lusk's superiors are aware of his ambitions and have a contract for termination ready should Lusk get out of hand. Reltin, the other thief in Rastull's Regiment, has secret orders to slay Lusk if he does anything to confound the interests of the Dark Ring. This sits well with Reltin, who has taken a liking to Lusk's magical sword.

Lusk was wounded by Quelkin's *magic missiles* and is still recovering (he currently has 9 hp). Because of his weakened state, he will abstain from direct confrontation with the PCs and try to use his concealment skills to best effect. Any PC who strays from the group will be the recipient of Lusk's backstab attempt.

Reltin: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; T3; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (backstab ×2); S 13, D 18, C 10, I 13, W 9, Ch 11; ML 8; XP 120; PP 58%, OL 35%, FT 19%, MS 78%, HS 35%, DN 22%, CW 87%, RL 0%; short sword, sling (10 bullets), two concealed throwing daggers, potion of *gaseous form* (from Rastull), 22 gp, and a 75-gp electrum brooch.

Reltin is a young upstart whose sole loyalty is to the Dark Ring, an influential thieves' guild. Both he and Lusk joined Rastull's Regiment as guild representatives. The guild masters, having financed a number of Rastull's treasure-hunting expeditions, wish to keep the evil wizard as an ally. If Rastull's loyalty turns elsewhere, both Lusk and Reltin have instructions to dispatch the mage at once.

Reltin is not a cold-blooded killer like Lusk. He attacks only if threatened or harassed and will usually withdraw after wounding an opponent. He kills under contract, but the instructions of the guild do not include murdering strangers. Besides, he has to keep an eye on Rastull and Lusk. Reltin prefers not to wear armor, as it hampers his thieving abilities.

Kett, gypsy-bard: AL N; AC 6; MV 12; B3; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 16, C 12, I 16, W 10, Ch 15; ML 12; XP 175; CW 50%, DN 20%, PP 10%, RL 5%; leather armor, dagger, 12 darts, *gloves of missile snaring, wand of magic detection* (three charges, command word "Zaru"), 25 gp in pouch, zither. Spells: *change self, ventriloquism.*

Kett is an unusual woman. In addition to her extraordinary musical talent, she is a keen observer of the most minute details and has the appraising and blind-fighting proficiencies. If the DM uses psionics in his campaign, Kett also has the following psionic wild talents: Control Flames, Danger Sense, and Life Draining (each of which can be employed once per day). So far, no one else in Rastull's Regiment is aware of Kett's psionic potential.

Kett joined Rastull's band in search of adventure and inspiration. She has not composed any new melodies for the last several months and is searching for a little action. She will defend herself and help protect the rest of the NPC party (except Lusk, whom she despises). She will not, however, attack the PCs without due cause. She may even be convinced to join the party if the PCs are adventurous enough for her tastes.

Playing the NPCs

When the PCs first arrive at Quelkin's manor, the DM should refer to the "NPC Locations" sidebar (see below). The locations of the NPCs vary from day to night. Quelkin's servant, Jethro, wanders about the manor in a *charmed* state, performing his usual functions on Rastull's behalf. He will first be encountered in the kitchen (area 5) day or night.

Rastull and his allies should be worthy antagonists for the PC party, and the DM is encouraged to play these NPCs as if they were his own characters. The NPCs assume that the PCs are evil, hired by the "evil mage" Quelkin, and the PCs will have to work hard to prove otherwise. Likewise, the PCs may assume that the NPCs are all evil, when in fact most of them are not. Regardless of their alignments, Rastull and his company are prepared to defend Quelkin's manor and use the following tactics to ensure victory:

- Once alerted to the PCs, Rastull has Jethro brought to him as a hostage. Rastull threatens to kill Jethro if the PCs do not surrender themselves or retreat, and he is quite willing to back up his threat. If Rastull harms Jethro, certain members of his band (Ozwell and Kett in particular) will become uneasy and create ripples of dissension throughout Rastull's Regiment. Clever and attentive PCs may find ways to capitalize on this situation.
- If the manor is breached, all surviving NPCs immediately withdraw to areas 14-16 on the third floor, using the secret staircase (area 8). Once assembled on the uppermost floor, they prepare their defense.
- Aerzon uses his familiar, Llue, to monitor the PCs' progress from a safe distance. Kett secretly uses her Danger Sense wild talent to discern when the PCs are near.
- Rastull casts his *rope trick* spell, enabling the entire NPC party to vanish from sight. (The PCs may believe that the NPCs have fled.) Rastull and the others remain hidden until the PCs leave or let down their guard, at which time the NPCs reappear to dispatch their unwanted foes.
- If the NPCs become divided, or if the PCs are in close proximity to Rastull, the evil mage saves his *rope trick* spell until the PCs are out of sight and most of his regiment is together. He casts his *haste* spell on Marne and Ozwell, ordering them to stand guard while he prepares his other defensive spells or drinks his magical potion. Rastull considers the fighters to be the most expendable members of his band.
- One of Aerzon's favorite tactics is to cast his *phantasmal force* spell on an open door, making the portal appear closed. If the PCs approach the door, Rastull and Aerzon automatically catch them by surprise with a few good spells.

NPC Locations

NPC	6:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M. Area	6:00 P.M.-6:00 A.M. Area
Rastull	16	16
Aerzon	15	9
Marne	10	7
Ozwell	5	10
Lusk	12	3
Reltin	7	12
Kett	4	10

Develop additional tactics based on the PCs' actions, keeping in mind that Rastull and his allies have worked well together for several months. The PCs may have the greatest success confronting the NPCs one at a time. With the exception of Rastull and Lusk, most NPCs are open to negotiations, or at least willing to avoid needless bloodshed. If the PCs can convince them that Quelkin is not an evil mage, or that their interests would best be served doing something else, Kett, Marne, and Ozwell may choose to leave Rastull to his own devices.

The DM may allow PCs to make Charisma checks when negotiating with the NPC party, but the players should not be deprived of the role-playing experience. Most of the NPCs are neutral, so make the negotiations difficult (particularly with the shadier NPCs like Reltin and Aerzon, and the less diplomatic ones like Marne). If the PCs negotiate with the NPCs in Rastull's presence, all Charisma checks are made at half (Rastull's influence over his regiment is tremendous, despite his evil alignment). If Rastull is killed or captured, the PCs will have a much easier time negotiating for Jethro's release and an end to the hostilities.

Ground Floor

1. Main Entrance. The grinning griffon statues that flank the entrance to Quelkin's manor are nonmagical. The entrance doors, however, have been *wizard locked* by Rastull. A tarnished brass knocker shaped like a jester's head is fixed to each portal. Of course, knocking on either door alerts all of the manor's occupants.

Read the following passage to the players when the PCs enter this area:

> The walls of this 20′ × 30′ chamber have been painted to resemble a forest displaying all the radiant colors of autumn. The ceiling is painted with overhanging boughs, while the floor consists of speckled brown tiles resembling earth. In the middle of the room stands a monstrous piece of abstract art: a cluster of sharp wooden spikes jutting upward in all directions, looking much like a headless porcupine. The spiked array sits atop a wooden stump. Light spills forth from the middle of the display, casting pointed shadows on the walls. Positioned under each window is a padded wooden bench adorned with rabbit carvings.

Quelkin designed the furnishings in all the rooms of his manor, including this one. The peculiar "headless porcupine" display is ominous in appearance but harmless. It consists of 11 4′-long wooden spikes that can be removed and wielded as ranseurs. The light emanating from the center of the spiked display is the work of a *continual light* spell cast by Quelkin.

2. Hall and Stairs.

> Two glowing orbs of glass illuminate this wood-paneled hallway. The orbs are suspended from the ceiling, one in the main corridor and the other between the two sets of stairs leading to the second floor of the manor. The entire floor of the 40′-long hallway is covered with diamond-shaped tiles—mostly white with some black tiles interspersed among them.

The twin glass orbs are each 1′ in diameter and have *continual light* spells cast on them. The "diamond tiles" were custom-fitted by Quelkin to add some artistry to an otherwise drab corridor.

When the PCs first walk down this hall, they must be very careful not to step on any of the black diamond floor tiles. (The PCs will always step on these tiles unless they mention they are deliberately avoiding the black tiles.) Stepping on a black tile triggers a combined *audible glamer* and *alarm* spell, which fills the hallway with raucous shouting. The noise is loud enough to alert any NPCs in areas 3, 5, and 7. NPCs in areas 9, 10, and 13 have a base 25% chance of hearing the noise (NPC thieves may add their detect noise scores to this chance).

3. Parlor.

> A pair of padded leather armchairs rests in front of a fireplace in this comfortable parlor. A candle chandelier is suspended from the ceiling above the chairs, and a slender wine cabinet stands against the north wall. A black bearskin rug lies on the floor, and a wooden cloak rack stands in the southeast corner. Mounted on a plaque above the fireplace mantle is a dead fish.

During the night hours, Lusk will be seated in one of the armchairs with his feet propped on an ottoman. Lusk is still recovering from Quelkin's *magic missile* attack and finds this room quiet enough for his silent scheming. He often toys with a fine-quality lock, picking it again and again. This does not hone his skill, but rather helps him think.

The wine cabinet contains several vintages, most of which Lusk and the other NPCs have sampled. Quelkin keeps a set of six gold flagons, each shaped to resemble a squid (50 gp each, 350 gp for the set). One of the flagons, however, was removed by Lusk and left upstairs (see area 12).

Inside the open mouth of the mounted pike, Lusk has hidden several treasures stolen from Quelkin's private chambers: a pouch of three 100-gp tourmalines; another pouch containing 35 pp; a golden comb with a dragon's head handle (150 gp); a wooden whistle with a silver chain (10 gp); a gold-plated corkscrew with a 50-gp bloodstone set into the handle (125 gp); a pair of flashy white gloves, each embroidered with a golden "Q" (25 gp for the pair); and a *dagger +1* in an electrum scabbard (75 gp). If forced to flee the manor, Lusk takes the fish with him.

4. Library. During the day, Kett can be found in this chamber. If she has not been alerted to intruders, she is playing her zither and singing. PCs close enough to listen will find the music beautiful but empty of feeling (Kett is still searching for inspiration).

> This entire wing of Quelkin's manor serves as the mage's library. The room is spacious, with tall, cathedral-like windows and a pitched roof crossed by wooden rafters. Hanging from these rafters are twin iron chandeliers that resemble octopi. A fireplace provides heat at the west end of the room. Bookshelves line the walls, but they are short (from the floor to about waist level). Most of the upper wall space is covered by colorful banners depicting beautiful aquatic scenes. The room is furnished with two long tables and a few handsome chairs.

Most of the chambers in Quelkin's manor have a specific decorative motif—in the case of this library, an oceanic one. Kett finds this room relaxing and

spends much of her day here. Her zither lies atop one of the tables, which are otherwise bare.

There are eight 12′ × 3′ banners (worth 200 gp each) hanging on the walls, each depicting an underwater scene with mermaids, tritons, sea horses, and similar creatures. Observant PCs will notice that the chairs and tables have been carved with shell-like frescoes. Atop the fireplace mantle is a clamshell filled with snuff. Purchased by Quelkin at a wizards' auction, this substance can be sold for 50 gp.

PCs searching the bookshelves will find hundreds of volumes on everything from *Anchovies and Other Yummy Fish* to *How to Train Your Pet Beholder.* Other volumes include *Sleighing in Hades, Grippy the Squid, Growing Your Own Violet Fungi, Troll Etiquette,* and *Macbreath* (the story of an ambitious red dragon who longs to be king). More serious tomes include a *vacuous grimoire* given to Quelkin by one of his academy chums. Inside the cover is the following verse:

To my friend and fellow mage,
In whom I place such kind affection:
Mark the words on every page
That voice my sincere predilection.

There are no volumes of great worth stashed in the bookshelves, but PCs who spend at least 12 solid hours rifling through the books may find a bent and tattered wizard's scroll with the spell *friends* written on it (cast at 4th level).

5. Kitchen.

The aroma of spices and warm ale fills your nostrils as you enter the kitchen. This room is heated by a crackling fire in the hearth. In the middle of the room stands a rectangular table cluttered with pots, and suspended above the table is a lit lantern. The walls are lined with cupboards, cabinets, and pegs dangling with utensils. A peculiar noise, much like the singing of a dwarf, emanates from within one cabinet.

Unless he has been taken away as a hostage, Quelkin's faithful servant, Jethro, will be encountered here. He occasionally leaves this room to tidy up the house or feed the horse in area 6, but he spends most of his time making meals for the NPC adventurers. Ozwell keeps an eye on Jethro during the day, but at night Jethro is here alone. Aerzon's familiar, Llue, is typically found here at all hours of the day, hiding among the spice jars on a cluttered shelf.

Jethro has been *charmed* by Rastull and will not voluntarily leave the manor without Rastull's permission. When confronted by unfamiliar PCs, Jethro runs upstairs to warn Rastull. He has no combat abilities and will not fight, even to defend himself.

Jethro is mute (but not deaf) and communicates using an odd gestural language he and Quelkin developed together (Jethro's sign language is incomprehensible to anyone else). Jethro lost the ability to speak about 10 years ago during a thunderstorm, as he stood near a wagon that was struck by lightning.

Jethro: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; ML 9 (5 while *charmed*); XP 150 (for his rescue only); unarmed.

Quelkin's kitchen contains a number of odd magical items that radiate strong dweomers whenever a *detect magic* spell is cast. The suspended lantern can be extinguished and relighted simply by clapping one's hands together twice in rapid succession. (The person clapping must be within 30′ of the lantern.) Amid the many pots on the center table is Quelkin's *ever-bountiful soup kettle,* which performs its function only after the following rhyme is sung while gently rubbing the lid. (The rhyme is engraved on the kettle's underside.)

Magic kettle tried and true,
I have a hungry tummy.
Summon forth your magic stew,
And feed me something yummy.

The not-so-melodious noise emanating from one of the cabinets comes from Quelkin's magical *singing flagon.* This silver mug is shaped in the likeness of a dwarf and holds two full pints of ale. The mug's visage is animate and has the personality of a rather stubborn but inebriated dwarf. This is Gulp, an adventurer's companion. Gulp is worth 100 gp but will not reveal its magical nature to those it doesn't like (such as a stuck-up elf). A successful *dispel magic* spell cast on the *singing flagon* (treat as 10th level) renders it permanently inanimate.

The magic flagon has encountered several of the NPCs and is willing to share its knowledge with anyone who drinks ale from it. Gulp likes the fighter Ozwell but finds him rather gullible. It knows Rastull is a mage (and does not like mages in general). Gulp can tell the PCs that Rastull has an apprentice named Aerzon, and that Aerzon's pet lizard roams the kitchen from time to time. Gulp dislikes the brooding human named Lusk but finds the other shady character (Reltin) both intelligent and reasonable (for a human). Gulp has never met Kett or Marne, or Rastull himself for that matter.

The last magical item in Quelkin's kitchen is a *bag of holding.* It is stretched over the rim of a garbage pail and is filled with rotten food, vegetable peelings, crusts, and other kitchen waste. It is about half full and currently contains about 125 lbs. of stinky, smelly garbage.

6. Stables and Shed.

This wing of Quelkin's manor houses the stables. Seven of the eight stalls are empty, but the southeastern stall holds a nicely groomed (if somewhat nervous) mare. Beyond the stables is a spacious but dusty chamber with horse saddles and garden tools hanging on the walls. Four large barrels have been pushed against one wall, and an anvil and bellows stand ready before a blackened hearth.

Quelkin's riding horse is named Blitzen. Jethro feeds the horse every morning (usually a pail of table scraps left over from the night before), but the mare has had very little exercise over the last several days. Blitzen is shy but will let just about anyone ride her. (NPCs may use the horse to escape, if necessary, although only Ozwell and Kett are proficient riders.)

Two of the barrels in the shed contain apple cider; the other two hold ale. Wooden spigots have been punched through the sides of one cider barrel and one ale barrel. None of the hanging garden tools are magical.

Blitzen, riding horse: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1-2; SZ L; ML 7; MM/194-195 (Horse).

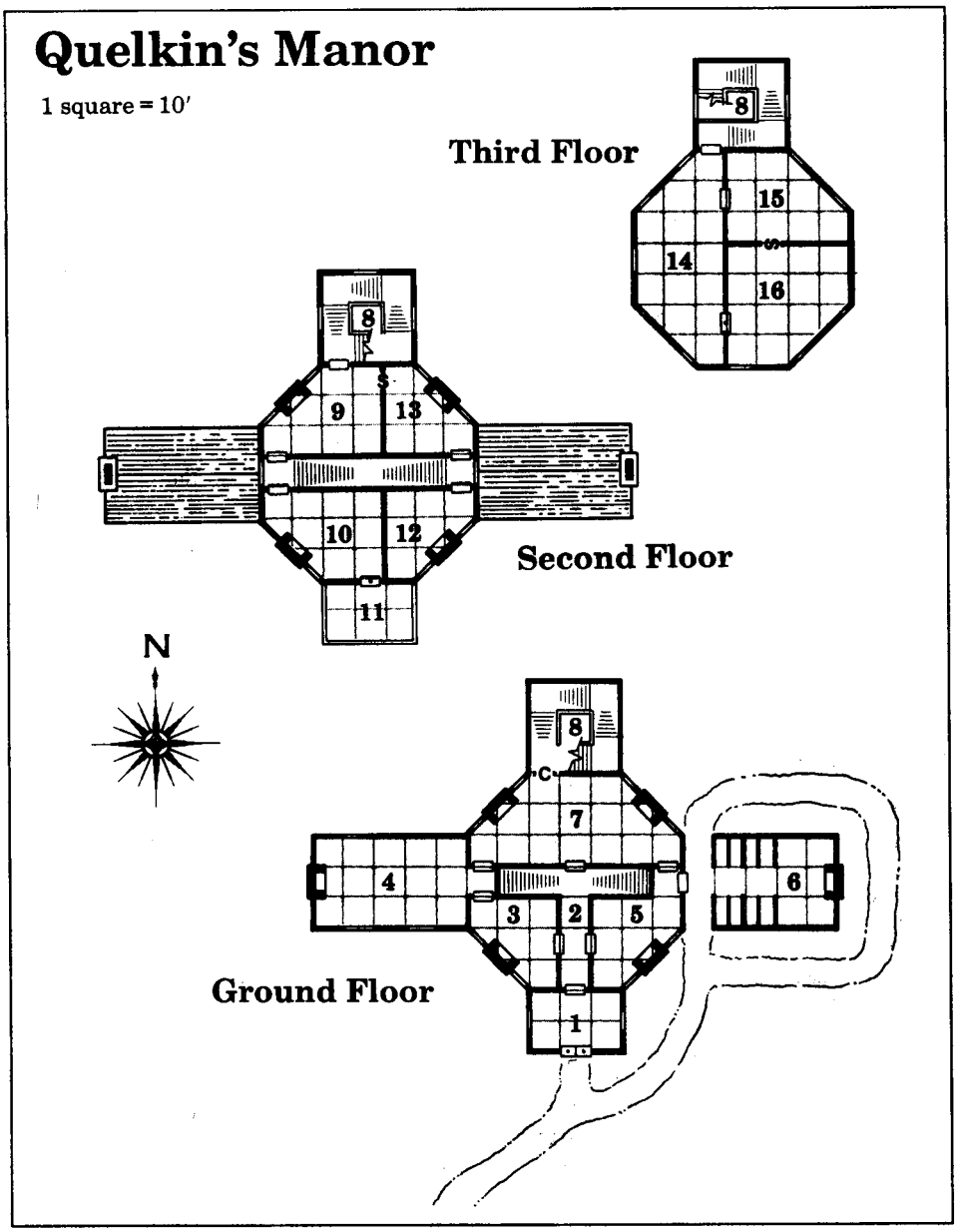
7. Dining Room.

The walls of this spacious dining chamber are covered with murals depicting radiant desert scenes. The backdrop of a rolling wasteland of golden sand makes this room seem much larger than it actually is. Suspended above the table is a 2'-diameter glass globe. The dining table is carved from yellow pine and blends nicely into the background. Several potted cacti are placed along the walls to contribute to the desert atmosphere. The floor is covered with carpets fit for a sultan.

The members of Rastull's Regiment never eat together in this room. Jethro usually delivers their meals to their chambers. However, Reltin can be found here during the day. He passes the time by carving wood and has fashioned a small flute for himself. During the night, Marne is on duty here. The fighter likes to discharge his crossbow in this spacious room and has even punctured a few of the potted cacti.

Positioned in the middle of the otherwise bare dining table is a 14"-tall ceramic statuette of a fat djinni (worth 220 gp intact). The statuette is hollow and quite delicate. Hidden inside is a wizard scroll with the spells *fireball, non-detection,* and *slow* (cast at 6th level). Four 8' × 11' carpets cover the floor, worth 200-500 gp each.

The globe hanging above the table glows brightly (as a *continual light* spell) when the command word "flira" is spoken. "Dantu" is the command word for turning it off. The desert murals conceal a door set into the north wall. This door leads to the only staircase (area 8) giving access to the third floor. The concealed door has springs that automatically close it behind the user.



8. Secret Staircase. This staircase joins all three floors of Quelkin's manor, with doors leading to areas 7, 9, and 14. The middle of the staircase tower was left open by design so Quelkin can *levitate* up the shaft or *feather fall* down without using the stairs. A wooden railing guards the staircase to prevent nasty falls.

Second Floor

9. Quelkin's Bedchamber. Strung above the southern door of this chamber is a small silver bell (5 gp) that jingles whenever the door is opened. If Aerzon is asleep in this room, the noise will awaken him.

This bedchamber is decorated in the same bizarre fashion as many of the other rooms in Quelkin's manor. A large bed stands against the eastern wall, its headboard and footboard carved with dizzying spiral patterns. Hanging on the walls are a number of framed pictures, each depicting some sort of optical illusion. A wooden statue of a six-armed woman with a snake's lower torso stands in the northeast corner. Several articles of clothing are draped over her arms, and a ridiculous feathered cap rests atop her head. A footed trunk with a large "Q" etched into its flat lid has been placed against the south wall.

Aerzon sleeps here during the night hours but retreats to area 16 when alerted to intruders. He is not a very sound sleeper and is 75% likely to hear anyone snooping around in his bedroom (except thieves who move silently).

The statue is 7′ tall and depicts a marilith tanar'ri. Quelkin's *robe of useful items* is draped over one arm. The other (nonmagical) articles of clothing include a pair of long underwear, a silk kimono, and a paint-smeared smock. Quelkin's wide-brimmed hat is adorned with two golden aarakocra feathers that, if sold to a quill maker, can fetch up to 50 gp apiece.

Quelkin's trunk (3′ × 2′ × 2′) contains the rest of the mage's clothing, all tossed in haphazardly. Rastull, Aerzon, and Lusk messed up the contents while searching for treasure (which they found and removed).

Three of the six framed paintings depict twisted geometric figures and buildings. The others show abstract optical illusions. Each picture is worth 5-20 gp. A secret door in the eastern wall leads to area 13; none of the NPCs have found it.

10. Guest Bedchamber.

This large bedroom is decorated in a tropical forest motif. The walls are painted with lush tropical plants, and the bed is covered with sheets emblazoned with leaflike patterns. Two black panther statues flank the fireplace. A glass tank holding a dangerous-looking snake rests on a table against the north wall, and a screen made of stretched crocodile hide stands unfolded by the south door. The screen hides a bowl of bananas on a jade pedestal. Mounted above the nearby fireplace is a peculiar metal instrument.

Marne the fighter sleeps here during the daylight hours. During restless afternoons, he plays with Wilbur, the snake, or cleans the spikes of his morning star. At night, Ozwell and Kett sleep here. Ozwell is a sound sleeper, but Kett stays up most of the night because the room's furnishings make her uncomfortable. She usually rests by the fireplace, sometimes playing her zither on the floor.

The strange device mounted above the hearth is Quelkin's arquebus, which the mage keeps for sentimental reasons. (He has no ammunition for the firearm.) He acquired the weapon during an elephant-hunting expedition 10 years ago. Although he encountered no elephants, Quelkin did bring back a poisonous snake (the one in the tank). The snake's name is Wilbur, and the glass tank has a cover to keep Wilbur from slithering out. Quelkin wears a thick leather glove (lying next to the tank) when handing the snake its weekly meal.

Snake, poisonous: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2 + 1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (onset time 1-6 rounds, 3-12 hp damage); SZ S (5′ long); ML 8; XP 175; MM/320-321.

The panther statues are made of ceramic. Each is worth 200 gp and weighs 50 lbs. The bananas in the glass bowl are pieces of varnished wood painted yellow. The jade pedestal is worth 650 gp and weighs 75 lbs. The crocodile-hide screen is wood-framed and worth 100 gp intact.

11. Balcony.

A stone wall encloses this 20′ × 30′ balcony. From this vantage point, one can just barely see the village of Carthington Cross beyond the trees to the south. A wooden door bars entrance to the manor.

The door to this balcony is usually bolted from the inside. Thieves who try to break into the manor through this portal suffer a −25% penalty to their open-locks rolls.

If the manor is under siege, Marne and Ozwell may use the low wall surrounding the balcony as cover while they fire crossbow bolts at intruders.

12. Servant's Quarters. The door to this chamber has been trapped by Lusk. Anyone opening the portal without first disarming the trap causes an *essence of darkness* potion (see *CTH,* page 104) suspended above the doorway to fall and shatter on the floor.

The shattered potion has the same effect as a *darkness 15′ radius* spell and gives the chamber's occupant time to prepare a defense. Lusk and Reltin have no trouble disarming the potion trap, and the other NPCs are aware of it. (They knock before entering.)

The walls and ceiling of this bedroom are painted to resemble white, fluffy clouds in an endless sky of pristine blue. Painted amid the clouds on the west wall is a flock of soaring sea gulls. Under the sea gulls is a bed covered with fluffy white pillows. Several more (stuffed) sea gulls are suspended from the ceiling. A white dresser stands next to the door, and a smiling portrait of Quelkin himself hangs above the mantle.

Quelkin furnished this room for his servant, Jethro. However, the room is currently shared by the two thieves, Lusk and Reltin. Lusk stays here during the day, trying to heal his wounds. This room always puts him in a bad mood—a frame of mind he seems to enjoy. Reltin rests here at night. Both rogues keep weapons under the pillow when they sleep.

The dresser contains Jethro's clothes, including his long white nightshirt and a sleeping cap. Atop the dresser is a squid-shaped flagon (taken from area 3) and a book titled *Odes to an Otyugh.*

13. Lavatory.

Standing in the southwest corner of this room is an iron bathtub with clawed feet. On the wall above the tub, several towels hang from pegs. On the floor by the tub is a bucket full of soap. A wooden washtub and washboard stand in the northwest corner near the fireplace, and two oil lanterns dangle from the ceiling.

The bathtub is magical and can fill itself with hot or cold water up to three times each day when the proper command word ("chod" for hot water or "froy" for cold water) is spoken. The water may be emptied with the command word "gnuff." Only Quelkin, Jethro, Aerzon, and Reltin know all three command words, although spells such as *identify* would certainly prove helpful.

Anyone searching the tub will see a painted wooden ducky bobbing in the lukewarm water left behind from Reltin's bath. A secret door set into the west wall leads to area 9. Quelkin uses this portal to move between the lavatory and his bedroom; the NPC party is not yet aware of its existence.

Third Floor

14. Gallery. PCs entering the gallery from the secret staircase (area 8) trigger a *magic mouth* spell when they touch the outside of the door. The *magic mouth,* cast by Rastull on the doorknob, speaks the words "Intruder alert!" three times (members of Rastull's Regi-

ment can pass through this portal without triggering the spell). The noise is loud enough to warn any NPCs on this floor.

> Standing in the middle of this chamber is a large octagonal table with a wooden replica of Quelkin's manor built atop it. The model looks perfect in every detail, including the surrounding trees. Lights even shine from the manor windows. The room itself is wood paneled and adorned with four empty suits of armor (two between the fireplaces and two between the eastern doors). Placed on pedestals under the windows are four fish-filled aquariums made of spherical glass. Each globe is 2′ in diameter. Hovering about the room are four gleaming daggers.

The *flying daggers* attack any PCs who try to cross the chamber. The daggers were brought to the manor by Rastull and are under his control. They are considered magical weapons for attack purposes.

Flying daggers (4): INT non; AL nil; AC 5; MV fly 24 (A); HD 1 + 1 (attack as 3-HD monsters); hp 6 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4 (× 3); SD immune to mind-affecting attacks, reflect *magic missile* spells; SZ T; ML special; XP 120; DUNGEON® Adventures #18/7.

The spherical aquariums contain several colorful varieties of fish, some of which scintillate in bright sunlight or glow in the dark. The tanks have small circular openings at their tops, large enough for a human arm to fit through. Quelkin devotes one of the spheres to lobsters, which Jethro broils for supper whenever important guests arrive. At the bottom of one sphere is a small chest decorated with gold leaf and set with turquoise (worth 300 gp intact) containing a pouch of 15 ep, a pair of gold earrings fitted with pearl-sized peridots (500 gp for the pair), and a *ring of water walking*. Unfortunately, the chest is protected by Quelkin's pet scorpion fish.

Scorpion fish: INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV swim 9; HD ¼; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (onset 2-12 rounds, incapacitates victim for 2-12 days); SZ T; ML 12; XP 7; new monster.

The replica of Quelkin's manor has a *continual light* spell cast inside it to make the windows light up. The model is fixed to the display table and cannot be removed without damage.

The four suits of armor are rather dusty and ordinary. In their metal gauntlets, they clutch various functional pole arms.

15. Quelkin's Study.

> A polished black desk with a tall, slender chair has been arranged in the middle of this chamber, facing the door. A tall bookshelf stuffed with volumes is positioned against the north wall. The southwest corner near the door is home to a lurching, bearlike creature with a sharp beak and ferocious claws. The monster, although stuffed, appears no less dangerous. Along the south wall hang two tapestries depicting the constellations, and hanging above the fireplace mantle is a framed painting of a . . . radish.

Rastull's apprentice, Aerzon, can be found here during the day. He spends long hours at the desk, reading his spell book. If alerted to intruders, he slips into area 16 through the concealed door in the south wall and joins his master.

The stuffed monster standing in the corner was once an owlbear (the same one that ran amok through Carthington Cross two years ago). The radish painting was purchased by Quelkin at an auction and can be sold for 50 gp. (The artist, Valpane, is well known.) The two star tapestries are accurate and worth 600 gp apiece. Behind one tapestry is the secret door leading to area 16.

The bookshelf is loaded with volumes, most of which deal with subjects only wizards would find interesting. Some of the books are quite strange and amusing (*Magical Properties of Walnuts, Slime Island: A Travel Guide, Jermlaine Jokes for All Occasions*), while others are more functional (*The Axioms of Astronomy, Bridge Building 101, Fungi Spell Components*). None of the books are magical, but hidden among numerous volumes on clay sculpture is Quelkin's magical *jar of preserving*. The jar holds a live toad (which Quelkin has affectionately named Spell Component).

The desk drawers are cluttered with blank papers, well-used quills, half-empty ink jars, and empty scroll tubes. PCs sifting through the drawers can also find a crystal paperweight (5 gp) shaped like a dodecahedron. Touching the dodecahedron activates a *continual light* spell; touching it a second time shuts the light off.

Aerzon usually leaves his spell book on the desk. During an intruder alert, he takes his book with him into area 16. Aerzon's book contains the spells *alarm, audible glamer, cantrip, detect magic, feather fall, find familiar, phantasmal force, read magic, sleep, spider climb,* and *wall of fog.*

16. Quelkin's Workroom. The confrontation between Rastull and the PCs will likely occur here. To keep intruders out, Rastull has *wizard locked* the door.

> The walls, floor, and ceiling of this spacious room have been painted jet black. Inscribed in gold on the floor are wizardly symbols and diagrams. A dimly glowing glass sphere appears to be suspended from the ceiling by a black rod. The only furnishings are an unmade bed beneath the eastern window, a two-door cabinet standing next to the door, and an L-shaped table in the middle of the room. A black cloth with pink polka dots drapes the table, which is covered with delicate alchemical apparatus. Also atop the table are an iron box and a lectern that supports an open book.

Rastull spends almost all of his time in this chamber, sifting through Quelkin's belongings and toying with his counterpart's alchemical equipment. He stays awake for most of the night, preferring to sleep in the mornings. His weasel familiar, T'bubnik, is always on guard against intruders and usually crouches on the southern windowsill.

The glass sphere suspended from the ceiling has a *continual light* spell cast on it, shedding a pale white glow on the room. The light's hue can be changed simply by uttering aloud the color desired.

The book on the lectern is one of Quelkin's spell books. Rastull has been reading the tome and has marked the *polymorph other* spell, using a dagger for a bookmark. The dagger's pommel is set with chips of alexandrite, increasing the value of this ornamental weapon to 250 gp. The other spells in Quelkin's tome can be determined by the DM. The book, which contains all the mage's third- and fourth-level spells, is clearly marked as Quelkin's and is bound in troll hide.

The iron box belongs to Rastull and is *wizard locked*. Inside lie Rastull's spell book (see below) and another of Quelkin's spell books (containing all his first- and second-level spells). Spells contained in the latter book may be determined by the DM as necessary. Also in the iron box are six unlabeled potions purloined from Quelkin's lab: *fire resistance, growth, invisibility, plant control, rainbow hues,* and *treasure finding*. Rastull has a fair idea of each potion's power but is hesitant to imbibe them at this time (some may have undesirable side effects). Hidden in a secret compartment of Rastull's box are two scrolls: a *protection from poison* scroll and a wizard scroll with the spells *phantom steed* and *wind wall* (cast at 8th level).

Rastull's spell book contains all the spells the evil transmuter has memorized plus the following: *detect magic, find familiar, magic missile, mount, phantasmal force, read magic, wall of fog; darkness 15' radius, ice knife* (see sidebar), *magic mouth, shatter, stinking cloud, wizard lock; explosive runes, gust of wind, item, lightning bolt, tongues, water breathing*. The book may, at the DM's discretion, be trapped with an *explosive runes* spell (6d4 +6 hp damage; rune reader gets no save; onlookers may save vs. spell for half damage). Triggering the spell destroys the book.

Amidst the alchemical apparatus on the table, the PCs can find Quelkin's *obsidian mortar and pestle* (magical items fashioned by the mage Lorloveim and described in the *Tome of Magic*, page 139). These items radiate strong alteration magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast.

Quelkin's cabinet contains all manner of beakers, flasks, vials, and jars, several of which are filled with spell components and various potent chemicals. None of the containers are labeled, as Quelkin relies on the substances' odors and appearances to identify them (or, if all else fails, an *identify* spell). PCs thoroughly exploring the cabinet's contents may stumble on an unlabeled potion of *extra healing* (overlooked by Rastull) that has the added side effect of turning the imbiber's skin scaly green for 1-6 days.

Tampering with the chemicals in Quelkin's cabinet can be dangerous, especially if the chemicals are mixed. Each time two or more chemicals are combined, the mixture may trigger an explosion (10% chance, 4d6 hp damage, save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Rarely does anything good come from combining these chemicals, unless the DM wishes to invent a list of peculiar accidental concoctions.

Ice Knife (Evocation)
Second-Level Wizard Spell

Range: 40 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 or more creatures in a 5' radius
Saving Throw: Neg.

When cast, this spell fires a dagger of ice at the target. This dagger flies to the target and hits as a normal weapon (as if thrown by the caster). A successful hit causes 2d4 hp damage. If the *ice knife* misses its target, the rules for grenadelike missiles are used to determine where the *ice knife* lands. When it strikes a solid object, the *ice knife* shatters with a loud snap, releasing a wave of numbing cold. All creatures within 5' of the impact must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or suffer 1-4 hp cold damage and be numbed for 1-3 rounds. A numbed character moves at half speed and has half the normal number of attacks. Armor class is reduced by 1, and the character's chance to hit is reduced by 2. Large heat sources (a roaring bonfire, for example) can improve the saving throw of any victim by allowing a +2 on the die roll.

The material components for this spell are a drop of melted snow and a tiny silver dagger.

Concluding the Adventure

The party should be given full experience points not only for slaying or capturing the members of Rastull's Regiment, but also for swaying NPCs over to their side or luring NPCs from the manor without the use of violence. By no means must this adventure end in a bloodbath, particularly if the players are clever and patient.

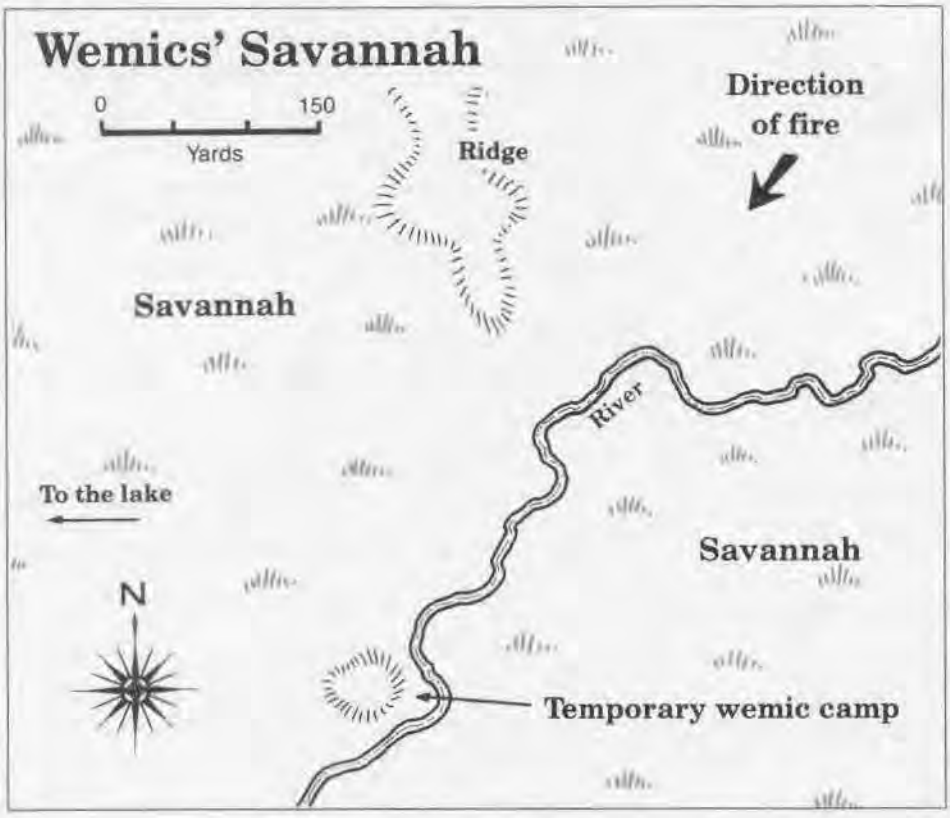
Once the PCs secure the manor, the party can send for Quelkin. While they have been busy fighting to regain his home, Quelkin has been slowly earning the trust of the citizens of Carthington Cross by sharing his outrageous stories of mishap and misadventure (he particularly likes recounting the time he and a band of intrepid mages hunted for elephants in some distant jungle). Although the locals are an adventure-craving bunch, they are still distrustful of the wizard. Quelkin is not the dastardly villain they had anticipated (even hoped for). Although Quelkin finds the tavern patrons a tolerable and attentive crowd, he must (regretfully) depart to make sure his house and its belongings are in order.

Quelkin wants all of his possessions returned to him. He may allow the party to keep one or two magical items as payment for saving his home and recovering the items stolen by the NPCs. He will give the PCs an added bonus (250 gp or a potion would not be unreasonable) if they rescued his faithful servant, Jethro. The PCs are free to claim the possessions of any slain NPCs, although Quelkin would love to have Rastull's spell book and will trade one of his own magical items (except the *wand of dazzling* or one of his own spell books) for the tome.

If the PCs performed their task with distinction, Quelkin invites them to stay for dinner. After a hearty lobster meal, the mage will happily share the stories of his life with the PCs . . . until they get bored and decide to leave. Quelkin forgives any NPCs who switched sides and abandoned Rastull's Regiment, provided they are willing to return everything they purloined from the manor.

NPCs who decide to join the adventuring party may become henchmen or, given time, full-fledged PCs. The psionically endowed gypsy-bard, Kett, may prove particularly useful in later adventures.

Captured NPCs must be taken to the jailhouse in Carthington Cross, where they remain until a patrol of soldiers arrives to escort them to the nearest city for trial. Quelkin will be summoned as a witness during these proceedings, and possibly the PCs as well if the DM so chooses. NPCs who are handled in this manner will no doubt harbor a strong hatred toward the PCs. Several of these NPCs—not just the evil ones—would make ideal villains for future adventures involving the troublesome PCs. Ω



Born free, dying young

BY RONA KREEKEL

"Smouldering Mane" is a short AD&D® adventure for a party of 3-5 PCs of levels 7-10 (about 34 total levels). The party should include at least one wizard and one or two fighters. A priest might be helpful, and the group must have at least one weapon with +2 enchantment. The adventure could even be played by one or two PCs (a single 11th-level priest, a solo 9th-level wizard, or an 8th-level fighter accompanied by a 7th-level wizard or 9th-level priest; suggested levels are minimums).

This adventure is set in a savannah but could also take place on any other temperate or subtropical grassy plain.

Finally, a strong arm and a magical weapon won't be enough. Creativity is the main key to success.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

For the last few days, you've been traveling over a plain with high yellow grass and only an occasional tree. The weather has been extremely hot, with a clear sky and few small clouds. You are very grateful for the soft breeze that has risen this morning. The crickets chirp loudly all around you, and the air in front of you is dancing and trembling through the heat. Now and then, you hear the dry grass crack beneath your feet.

You're heading for a lake some five miles away when you start to feel uneasy, although nothing seems to be wrong. You can't really decide what is bothering you, but you get the strong urge to run.

Looking up, you see dark, unnatural clouds billow across the sky, followed by the heavy smell of burning grass. You can tell that danger is moving quickly toward you. Soon you will be able to hear the terrifying sounds of a crackling savannah fire.

All kinds of panic-stricken animals come running in your direction. First are the gazelles, fleeing with high graceful jumps. They are followed by gnu and zebra that fill the air with the sound of thundering hooves. A cheetah passes a warthog without taking notice of its natural prey. In addition to the birds in the sky and many small animals underfoot, you see giraffes, a buffalo, a rhinoceros, elephants, hyenas, jackals, baboons, and ostriches. You even recognize a porcupine with rattling spines.

Just as you decide to follow the animals, as they will probably head for the nearest place with water, an impressive figure emerges from the high grass. The lower body of a lion supports a golden-furred human torso topped with a thick black mane. The creature's lionlike nose is russet, and his yellow eyes have vertically slit pupils. He carries a small leather shield and a javelin, and all over his body are burned spots of fur. Where the flames have touched his mane, the fire is still smouldering.

The beast man looks tired and a little desperate. With a determined expression he addresses you in highly accented Common:

"Dear travelers! I am Brul, chieftain of my pride. Time is running short, so I'll be quick. We cannot extinguish this fire, cannot even

SMOULDERING MANE

control it! You must help us before the fire destroys our beautiful land and all life in it that is too slow to flee. I know it's dangerous, but I'm asking you earnestly, and in name of the newborn cubs in our pride. I'm begging you to help us."

If the adventure does not take place on a savannah, the DM should change the types of animals encountered. Typical inhabitants of a steppe are saiga antelopes, onagers, wild horses, marmots, hares, and steppe cats. On a prairie you can find bison, deer, antelopes, prairie dogs, coyotes, and prairie fowl.

If the PCs decide not to help Brul, the DM should take care that they do not act against their alignment. Brul's pride is powerless and must flee to the lake, risking the lives of the cubs. Because the cubs cannot walk yet, they must be carried by adults. In combination with exhaustion and the smoke that makes breathing difficult, the whole group is slowed down considerably, making it possible for the fire to outrun them.

On the other hand, if the PCs make an attempt but fail, Brul's family will bring the party safely to the lake, if necessary.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Brul is a wemic. His pride consists of eight males (including himself), 11 females, four half-grown youngsters, and three newborn cubs.

Brul (wemic): INT average; AL N; AC 6 (5 with shield); MV 12; HD 5+8; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 and by weapon type; SD −2 initiative modifier; SZ L (7'); ML 12; MM/357.

Wemic males have statistics like Brul's (DM should roll individual hit points). Wemic females are their men's equals, but their AC is 7 and they do not use any weapons. The males use javelins in combination with stone clubs or short swords. All adult wemics can leap 10' upward or 30' forward.

The wemics are veterans of many a savannah fire, but they can't control this one because it is fed by a fire elemental who is furious at having been imprisoned in a *staff of the elements* (*Tome of Magic,* page 130). When an elementalist wizard attempted to use the staff's *Malec-Keth's flame fist* power to immolate the body of his tribe's recently deceased high priestess, the trapped elemental burst forth, destroying the staff in the process. The elemental's angry rampage will end only when the blaze is extinguished; then it will return to its home on the plane of elemental Fire. But extinguishing the conflagration will be extremely difficult as long as the elemental has not been destroyed. Remember that creatures under four Hit Dice without magical abilities cannot harm the fire elemental.

Fire elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 12; hp 66; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8; SA burn flammable objects (object gets a saving throw vs. magical fire at −2); SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 6,000; MM/100.

If the fighters in the party are not strong enough, the DM can decrease the power of the elemental to: HD 8; hp 42; THAC0 13; XP 2,000.

The Fire

If the PCs decide to help the wemics, Brul quickly leads them to a temporary camp behind a rock near a gently flowing river, where the pride is waiting. All look tired and singed, and the spotted cubs are crying softly. Brul introduces the PCs to his people and then takes them aside to consult with all the males of the pride. The wemics will follow any reasonable plan the PCs come up with.

The wemics tell the PCs that, not far to the north, a rocky ridge juts out near the river, forming a gateway to the savannah beyond. The space between the rock and the water is about 85 yards, and the fire can be stopped in the gap. If the PCs fail there, there is no other obstacle between the fire and the lake and all will be lost! Give the PCs enough time to make a plan. The river is big enough to stop the fire elemental from crossing.

Some ways to solve the problem are using spells like *wind wall* and *wall of ice* to make the "gate" smaller, or *control weather* and *control winds* to lead the fire in a circle or extinguish it by heavy rains. Other spells, like *gust of wind,* are not strong enough, although *transmute dust to water* may have some success. All inventive ideas should be rewarded with at least some effect. There is no time to build walls or dig broad ditches, unless a priest uses the *speak with animals* spell to obtain the help of strong animals, intelligent enough to assist them (who have not already fled).

Getting into Action

After the PCs have made a plan, the wemics help them approach the fire, which is close to the "gate" now (no matter how much time the PCs took to work out their plan). As soon as the party comes close to the fire, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

This is a terrible fire indeed! How can your small group, aided only by the intelligent lion-creatures, ever hope to turn it aside? Lambent flames form arms, reaching out as if to grab you. When you look more carefully—painful through the searing heat—it seems as if two blue eyes are staring at you through the flames! Suddenly, you notice that a coherent mass of flame is moving straight toward you, waving two fiery arms that seem to expand and contract as it comes.

The PCs will have to defeat the fire elemental alone, for the wemics are busy elsewhere. The lion-centaurs will continue with the original plan and will try to stop the fire while the PCs are fighting the fire elemental. The elemental is the center of the fire-front and is distinguishable by its height (12', compared to 6'-8' for the normal flames), intense color and heat, and bodylike forms. Priest spells like *endure heat, resist fire, flame walk,* and *protection from fire* will be very useful.

PCs who come very close to the savannah fire without magical protection receive 1-6 hp damage (at 10') or 1-12 hp damage (at 3') every round. The fire has a Movement Rate of 9 (unless the party has changed the wind conditions), so most PCs should be able to outrun it. The fire elemental's Movement Rate is 12, but it will probably not break free from the normal flames.

Continued on page 71

WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT

BY STEVE D. LOKEN

Watery ghosts under a midnight sun

Artwork by P.L. Wolf

Steve is a 23-year-old aspiring free-lance photographer and writer with a bachelor's degree in archaeology. He would like to thank his wife, Nancy, for putting up with his gaming stuff, and their two cats, for helping to write this module by walking across the keyboard when Steve wasn't looking.

"When the Light Goes Out" is an AD&D® adventure for one DM and one player, using a 1st-level priest PC of any non-evil alignment in a Vikinglike setting. Although the PC needn't be a cleric, the ability to turn undead would be extremely helpful. However, spells from any sphere of influence will have their place in this adventure. The adventure works well for a PC with almost enough experience to reach 2nd level; it can be played as a test of the PC's faith and skill. Role-playing is an important part of this adventure; priests of different mythoi will react differently to the encounters and situations presented. The DM should read the entire adventure thoroughly before playing to gain a feeling for the setting's desolation.

Adventure Background

A superior in the player-character's order tells the PC to gather his belongings and prepare for an adventure. The temple supplies the PC with six candles; two flasks of holy water; and paper, quills, and ink with which to keep a record of his experiences. The high priest tells the young priest that he is being sent to an island where food and lodging will be provided for him. His task involves investigating strange occurrences in a lighthouse. Read or paraphrase the following information to the player:

> Somber clouds race across the bleak steel sky. You huddle forward in the rowboat, wrapping a heavy blanket around you to fight off the damp autumn chill. The four rowers maintain a steady, mechanical rhythm, forcing the craft through the dark, jostling waves. Ahead of you, appearing now just over the horizon, you can make out the forms of the black, sea-worn rocks that are the Helstrom Islands.
>
> *It's a suitable place for a ghost,* you think to yourself as your boat journeys ever closer. The barren, desolate

rocks look inhospitable to anything living. You recall what your temple superior said.

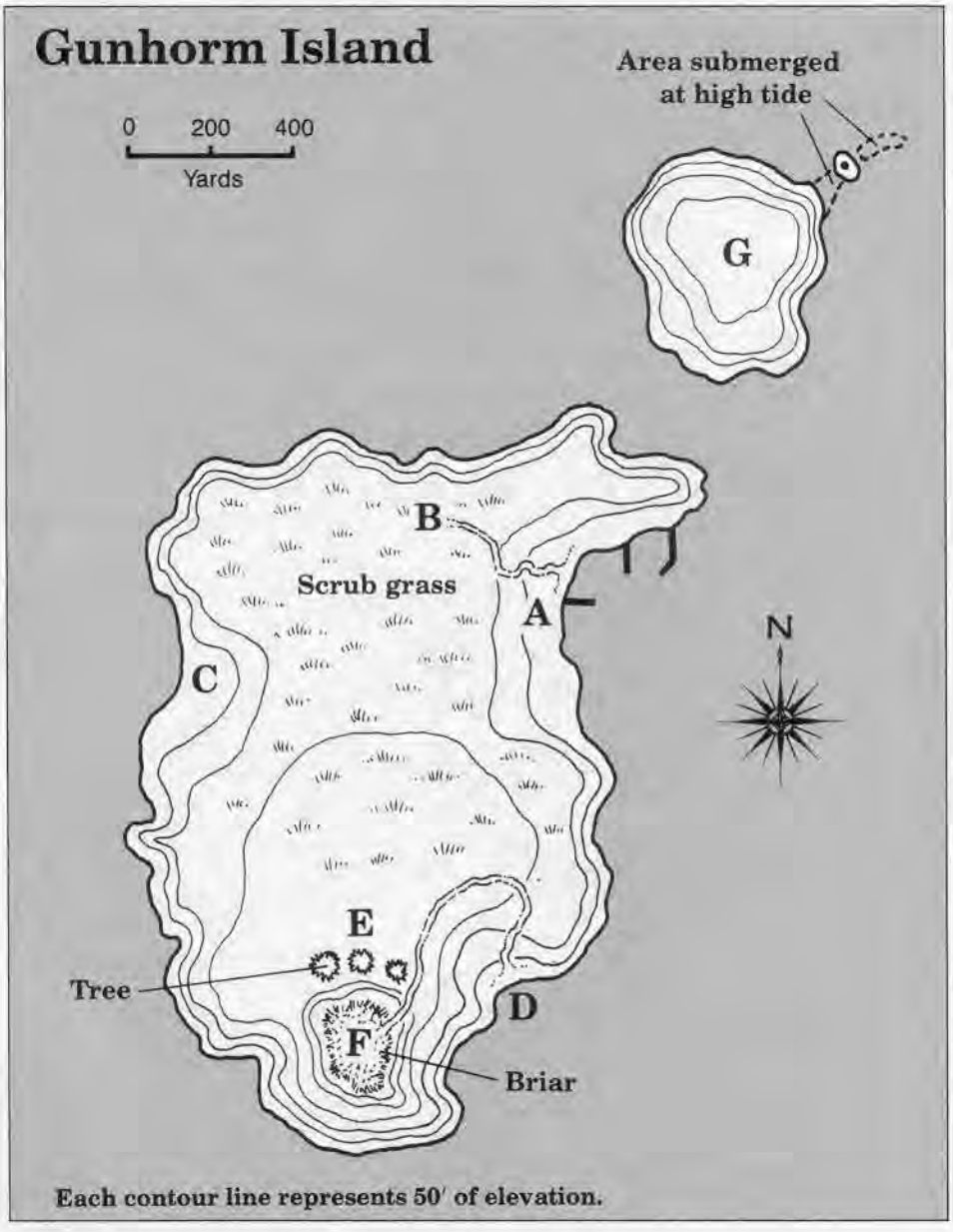
"The islanders say the lighthouse is haunted. None of them will even go near it, and the Keeper vows never to return unless we do something about it. Until we do, no ships will make it through the channel to Rolskad. I'm sending you to investigate. This isn't the first time we've been called on to rid them of ghosts. They're an incredibly gullible folk out there. Last time it turned out to be an injured sea otter crying in pain. You'll probably find some owls nesting in the tower. I've yet to run across any record of a real island ghost in our annals, but we must send somebody or the settlement will collapse. The task falls to you, young one."

It sounded simple enough. Spend a few days in a backwater fishing village, poke around the lighthouse, sprinkle some holy water in it, and tell the townspeople their ghost is gone. What could be easier? After all, the temple annals had no record of an authentic haunting of the Helstrom Islands over the 300-year history they covered.

However, as the high, black cliffs of the Helstrom Islands loom ever closer, an uneasy feeling begins to creep into your bones. You shiver, not entirely from the cold.

What if the lighthouse really is haunted?

Within two hours you come alongside the largest of the Helstrom Islands, near the village of Gunhorm where you will be landing. A lone man stands at the crest of a hill, tending a meager flock of small, hardy sheep. You pass by, your crew rowing strongly and steadily through the pitching seas. Twenty minutes later you reach the tiny harbor of Gunhorm.



For the DUNGEON MASTER™

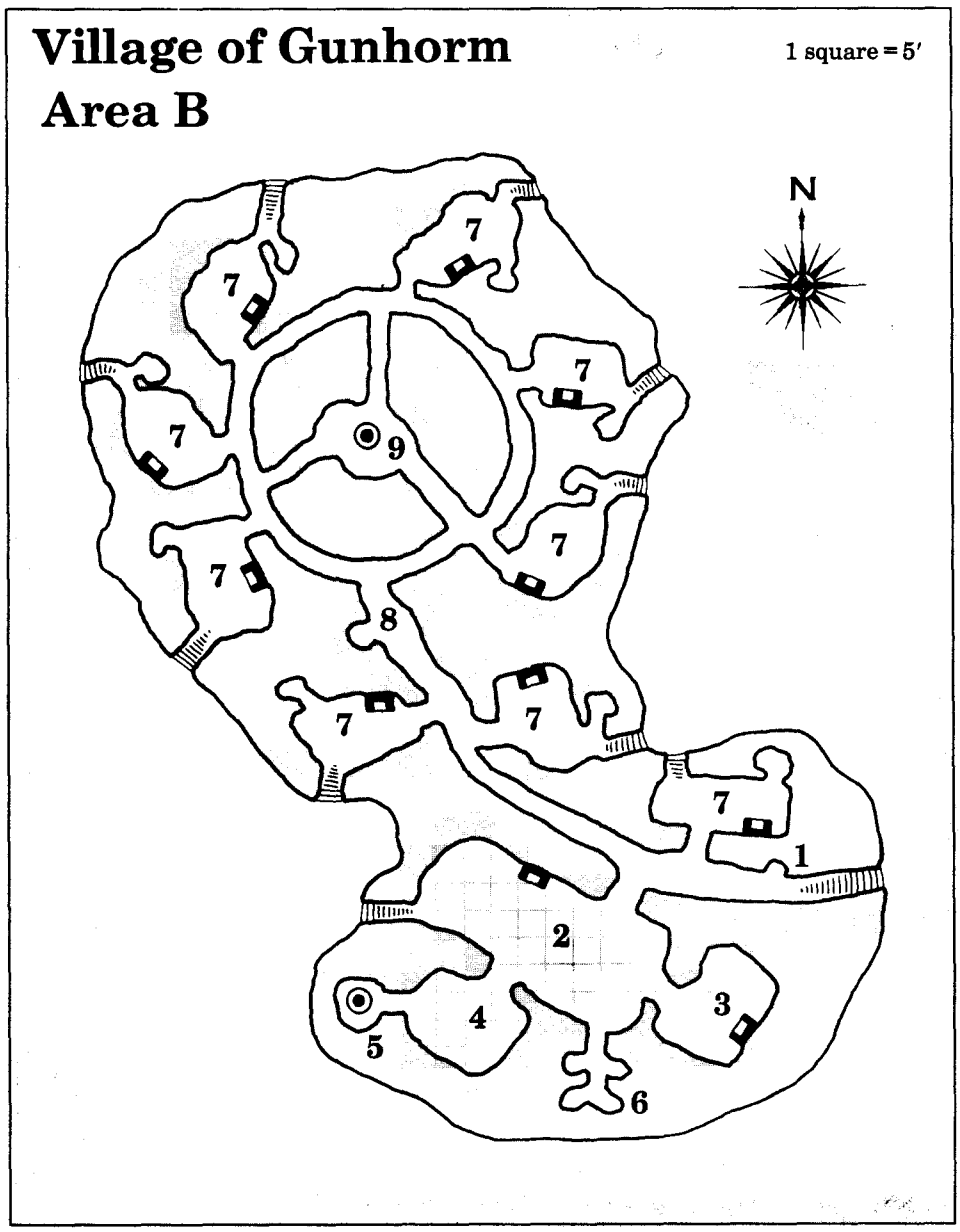
The isolation and desolation of the Helstrom Islands have led the people of Gunhorm to become extremely fearful. They keep garlic on hand to ward off vampires, pay close attention to natural omens, and gather together in a protected building on several nights during the year when they believe spirits roam free. However, they work hard, maintaining a meager yet comfortable existence through fishing, whaling, herding sheep, and keeping the lighthouse.

Maintaining the lighthouse is the key to the villagers' survival. In exchange for marking safe passage for shipping, the port city of Rolskad sends Gunhorm a supply of grain for bread, wood for boats, and peat for fuel.

Not surprisingly, the Keeper of the Light, the man who maintains the lighthouse, is one of the most honored people in the community. His image is enhanced by the fact that he is a minor mage, using spells such as *affect normal fires* and *dancing lights* to increase the efficiency of the lighthouse.

However, the current Keeper, Hraemar Norbatr, is an old, lonely man, no longer able to fulfill his post. Over the past few years, he has turned to wine for comfort and is now a hopeless alcoholic. The Keeper's addiction has hindered his abilities, leading to the senseless loss of a trading vessel.

On a stormy night one month before this adventure, the Keeper was more drunk than usual, virtually passed out on the floor of the lighthouse tower. The beacon was on, but the intoxicated Keeper did not cast the spells necessary



to light all the treacherous areas, and a trading vessel named the *Seahorse* was wrecked on the rocks. The captain, an evil man in life, cursed the Keeper as he went down with his ship. The Keeper saw the disaster but never mentioned it to any of the villagers.

The captain's powerful hatred made his spirit return as a poltergeist, bent on seeing the Keeper destroyed for his incompetence. The poltergeist began haunting the lighthouse, hoping to scare off the Keeper who caused his death. It worked.

Now the poltergeist roams the abandoned lighthouse, frightening off all visitors. Its ultimate goal is retribution on the Keeper, to punish him for destroying the *Seahorse* and all her crew. Shipping has come to a standstill, and the village is no longer receiving supplies from Rolskad. Although the villagers aren't in dire danger yet, they will need peat fuel to survive the coming winter. If the PC can exorcise the sea captain's vengeful spirit, the town can continue its precarious existence.

Starting the Adventure

When the PC arrives in the harbor, read or paraphrase the following information to the player:

> Icy ocean spray billows into the harbor as dark breakers crash against the stone breakwater. Two wooden wharves jut into the sea, rising and falling with the gently rolling sheltered water. Several fishing boats are lashed to the wharves, rigging and gear all neatly stowed. A lone fisherman sits in one of the boats, smoking his clay pipe as he carefully mends a fishing net.
>
> At the end of one of the wharves stands a tall, pale-skinned woman. She clutches her coarse gray cloak tightly about her to keep out the chill. Her dark hair swirls sideways in the erratic gusts of wind. She motions to an empty mooring spot at the wharf, and your rowers skillfully maneuver the boat to it. The woman offers her hand to help you out of the boat and says, "Welcome to Gunhorm. I am Ara Medora, your guide." The crew quickly unloads your scant gear, bids you farewell, and pushes off again into the cold, dark sea. They will return in one week to take you back to your temple.
>
> As you leave the wharf and make your way up the trail toward the village, you pass a stone building, in front of which stand three large hide-covered structures. Wisps of thin white smoke leak from beneath the hides, and the stiff breeze scatters them across the rocky shore. A group of men and women, all dressed in coarse woolen clothing, stand in front of the shacks by a makeshift table, gutting and cleaning barrels of fish.
>
> As you and your guide walk past, the workers pause to study you with furrowed brows and uneasy gazes. One of the older men stares at you, mutters something to his companions, and then gestures toward the northeast. Turning that way, you see that he has indicated a dreary, desolate spire jutting up from a small rocky island to the north. Only after you are well up the trail do the men and women return to their work.

Ara Medora, Matron of Gunhorm: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 6, C 7, I 12, W 15, Ch 15; ML 15; quarterstaff.

As Matron, Ara Medora is the leader of Gunhorm, a modest woman with a will of iron. She is the only person who deals directly with outsiders. Ara will help carry the PC's gear up to the village and lead him to the gathering hall. (See areas B and B2.) The wind prevents any conversation until Ara and the PC are inside the buildings.

Gunhorm Island

Gunhorm's tiny harbor is protected by a large stone breakwater constructed of several granite boulders loosely arranged in a line that curves through the water from the headland toward the shore. Within the harbor, two wharves provide moorage for up to six large fishing vessels, although the villagers own only five. During the day, the wharves are empty except for damaged craft; the fishermen are out earning their living. However, all the vessels return by dusk.

A narrow stretch of black pebbles forms the beach of the harbor, nestled between looming cliffs that stretch out to either side. A pathway leads from the wharves, past the fish drying station, and up to the village.

A. Fish Drying Station. This 15′ × 10′ stone building houses coils of rope, spare oars, hides, barrels, and caulking. In addition, it contains several wooden frames and large pieces of hide that can be assembled to form drying houses. During the day, several men and women tend the fires within these structures, processing the last day's catch. When dried, the fish are packed in barrels and carried up to the village. At night, the equipment is stowed and everybody returns to their homes.

B. The Village. The pathway leads from the harbor, up the slope between the cliffs until it flattens out on the island plateau. A series of turf mounds, the roofs of the village's semi-subterranean dwellings, rises from the ground about 20 yards from the top of the slope. A single, stone-lined opening is visible on each of the mounds. Furthermore, a larger opening is cut in the ground, protected from rain and snow by a driftwood shelter. A low, narrow turf mound, the ceiling of the village passageways, leads from the main entrance, branching out to connect the many turf homes.

B1. The Tunnel.

A set of rough stairs cut into the rocky earth leads into a narrow, semi-subterranean passage roofed with turf. The passage, about 5′ wide and 6′ high, is cold and dark. Ara retrieves a small stone bowl from an alcove cut into the stone wall. She strikes a flint, and soon a pale, flickering light dances from the bowl. Gazing inside it, you see a wavering yellow flame burning the tail of a small dried fish.

Ara leads you down the passage about 35′ to a hide-covered opening on the left. She pulls back the hide and motions you inside.

The light source is a candlefish, an everyday commodity in the Helstrom Islands. When dried, a candlefish provides light equivalent to one normal candle. Ara leads the PC into area B2.

B2. Gathering Hall.

From the passage you step into a comfortable-looking common room filled with stone tables and sheepskin-covered benches. A huge fire burns in the stone fireplace, filling the room with a welcome heat. Ten people are gathered around one of the large tables, listening to an 11th person telling a story. The storyteller is an old man, completely bald, wearing hide clothes decorated with shells, beads, and ivory. He ceases speaking as you enter, and all eyes turn to you. Ara glares back, and the people resume their activity. Ara takes you to an empty table in the far corner.

"Don't mind them," she says, nodding toward the group. "They aren't used to outsiders." She offers her hand to shake. "I'm Matron of Gunhorm. It was I who summoned your aid. That man," she points to the storyteller, "is Hraemar, the Keeper of the Light. It is his lighthouse that is haunted. We need you to get rid of the ghost."

A young girl brings a tray with three wooden mugs and a pot of boiling tea on it. She stares wide-eyed at you as she sets it down, then scampers away like a frightened rabbit.

"They will all be like that. They have heard that you speak with gods. That scares them. You will be staying in that room, there," she points to another doorway in the room. "We can give you food, but it is hard fare." Ara pours the tea, a pungent, briny-smelling brew, then beckons the Keeper to the table. "Keeper Hraemar will now tell you about the ghost."

The old man sits at the table and takes a cup of tea. From a pocket, he brings out a small flask and pours its contents into his cup. Picking it up, he stares into it and turns the cup slowly in his thin, withered hands. Speaking softly, he begins his tale.

"It is darkness, that thing, and it's after my soul. The Light save me, it is! The night . . . evil . . . I never saw it, yet I knew it was there, watching me. Ever since . . ." his voice trails off, and a glazed look replaces his stare. He shakes his head, then continues.

"A fortnight ago it was. I was heading up the stairs to light the beacon." The old man is more animated now and looks right at you. "Halfway up the stairs, it started. The boards began to shake. They were ripped from the iron mountings and flew at me. I backed down, afraid. Then *they* fell on me. Foul, squeaking rats on my neck, my face." The old man rubs his throat, and you can see fresh scars, like bites, on his withered flesh. "I screamed, turned, ran. It laughed. I was almost out, just a few steps away, when I heard the darkest, most evil laughter. It froze the blood in my veins. I turned in time to see the harpoon flying at me, its rusted head aimed at my heart." The man touches his chest and shivers at the memory. "How it missed I'll never know, but Light help me, I fled." He stares back into his tea. "I don't know if I can ever go back."

The Keeper can't provide much more information than this. Since the poltergeist is invisible, Hraemar is unable to describe it, and though he understands the poltergeist's origins, he won't reveal them to the PC. Doing so would mean losing his position as Keeper, a dishonor he is not prepared to face.

Hraemar's reference to "the Light" reveals the religious awe that the villagers attach to maintaining the lighthouse; they worship light. Hraemar is particularly devoted to the Light, as every night he performs a series of cleansing and preparatory rituals before lighting the beacon. He often refers

Village Encounters

Both village encounters should take place before the PC visits the lighthouse. "The Rescue" occurs right after the PC arrives in the village, after the Keeper has finished his tale about the haunting. "An Old Man's Best Friend" takes place the following morning at breakfast.

The Rescue

This encounter gives the PC an opportunity to win the villagers' trust. When the PC is questioning the Keeper about the ghost haunting the lighthouse, read the following description:

> A young boy dashes, breathless and gasping, into the gathering hall. He staggers up to Ara. "Sanda. . . hurt. . . come quickly." He turns and, half running and half staggering, pounds out of the room. A woman, with long red hair tied in a single braid leaps from her seat and follows the boy, a look of desperate fear clouding her face. Ara runs out after them.

If the PC follows, he sees that the boy is leading the women to Deadwood Strand (area D), where several children were gathering driftwood to take back to the village. One of the children, a girl named Sanda, slipped on a wet rock and was knocked unconscious. The boy, Phelan, is unable to speak because he is winded from running. The red-haired woman is Morgana, Sanda's mother.

Morgana: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 10, I 7, W 8, Ch 11.

When the PC arrives at the scene, read the following to the player:

> Running down the rocky slope to the beach, you see a group of children gathered in a circle, looking down at the motionless, ocean-soaked form of a young girl. The red-haired woman is kneeling beside her, holding the girl's hand and crying softly. When you arrive, the children stand back to let Ara kneel beside the girl to examine her injuries.
>
> The girl is young, about 10 years old. She has been covered with a jacket, and another is folded as a pillow beneath her head. Dark blood is thickly caked in her hair and covers most of her forehead, where a large cut is the obvious source of the bleeding. Ara pulls a bandage from her bag and begins tending the wound.

The girl will not regain consciousness without magical help. Although Ara can stop the bleeding, Sanda will die after remaining in a coma for four days. However, she needs only 2 hp restored magically to regain consciousness.

Morgana does not trust the PC, an outsider. If the PC attempts to help the child, Morgana spits on him, and pushes him away from her daughter. A charismatic or soothing PC can calm the woman, though. A *command* would work, as would persuasion. A successful Charisma check indicates that the PC has soothed Morgana's fears.

If the PC heals the child, he alleviates some of the villagers' suspicion. Morgana is grateful, and she apologizes for her earlier behavior. The other villagers are still apprehensive near the PC, not from fear of evil but from fear of his unknown power. However, the village will be happier and have a more positive outlook, since a powerful mystic such as the PC can surely get rid of their ghost.

Finally, the PC should make an Intelligence check. If successful, he notices that the wood the children had been gathering includes cut planks. The planks are wreckage from the ship that sank due to the Keeper's mistake. None of the villagers has any idea of where the wreckage came from, and the Keeper will also deny any knowledge of it.

An Old Man's Best Friend

This encounter serves two purposes. First, it provides the PC with a chance to gain a valuable item, a *wand of enemy detection,* that could assist him in his task. Second, it is meant to mislead the PC, drawing his attention away from the real problem of the poltergeist haunting the lighthouse and focusing it on the ghostly apparition at the Giant's Table (area F).

When the PC is eating breakfast on his second day on the island, read the following to the player:

> The bowl of soup looks more like slop than the food you are used to; its chunks of oily fish are mixed with pieces of dark green seaweed. The rest of the people in the gathering hall seem to have similar feelings about their meals. Nevertheless, everyone eats it, well aware that this is all that is available.
>
> As you sit at your table, pushing bits of fish around the wooden bowl, you notice an old blind man sitting alone in a corner, sobbing noisily. One of the fishermen turns to him and snaps, "Quit your blubbering, Galvin. We've got enough problems without your whining about that stupid cat." The old man sinks into his seat, his sobs replaced by low, sorrowful mumbles.

The blind man is Galvin Perth, a retired fisherman and dual-classed fighter-mage.

Galvin Perth: AL NG; AC 10; MV 7; W4/F5; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 16, D 11, C 4, I 17, W 10, Ch 11; ML 13; knife. Spells: *mending, spook, unseen servant; irritation, locate object.* Additional spells in book: *comprehend languages, find familiar, hypnotism; whispering wind.*

Galvin, now in his seventies, was a mage over 50 years ago. However, he was drafted into the navy, which prevented him from studying magic further. In the navy he learned to fight, to sail, and to live off the sea. After a long career, he retired to Gunhorm for the quiet, out of the way atmosphere.

He is now blind and old, bitterly resentful of the villagers who distrust and shun him because of his eccentric ways. His only companion is his familiar, a large orange tabby cat called Tempest. The villagers don't realize that Galvin is a mage, but they do fear him. However, they feed him and keep him clothed because he can understand foreign sailors (with his *comprehend languages* spell) when they wish to trade, and has an uncanny ability to find lost items (using his *locate object* spell). Also, people who treat him too poorly often end up developing rashes, a result of his *irritation* spell. Galvin's spell book consists of sheets of brass with the spells

Continued on next page

reverently to the Light in conversation. Furthermore, he eagerly boasts to the PC of his ability as Keeper:

"I am the only one that the light spirits listen to. Anyone can make a lantern burn, but when I ask, the spirits make it glow as bright as a bonfire. And when a ship is near, they answer my call and glow above the submerged reef, to warn the ship. They don't listen to anyone else, the light spirits. Just me." He taps his chest proudly at this and is obviously pleased with his ability.

Hraemar doesn't realize he is a mage casting *affect normal fires* and *dancing lights*. The job of Keeper has become so ritualized over the past four centuries that he and the villagers see his powers as religious, rather than magical. He believes the book he reads from was a gift from the light spirits, written in their language, with the proper way of asking for their help inscribed within. In fact, it is a spell book.

Hraemar Norbatr, Keeper of the Light: AL N; AC 10; MV 8; M3; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 6, D 11, C 8, I 16, W 10, Ch 14; ML 8; knife. Spells: *affect normal fires, dancing lights; pyrotechnics.*

After Hraemar finishes his tale, run "The Rescue." (See the "Village Encounters" sidebar.)

Continued from previous page

carved in relief, so that he may "read" them with his fingertips.

If the PC talks to Galvin to discover why he is so sad, the old mage responds that it is because his cat has run away from home. The cat is his only friend, and he feels lost without her. He tells the PC that she is probably at the Giant's Table, for she has run there before. Galvin implores the PC to go look for her. Other villagers who hear Galvin asking this, however, warn the PC not to go, claiming that the Giant's Table is an evil place. An old fisherman relates the following tale:

> "That place, aye, it seems harmless enough during the day, but you haven't seen it at night. No. That's when the beast wakes and guards it." The old man's accent is thick, difficult to understand, but something in his voice holds your attention. "Ten feet high it stands at the shoulder, a glowing white wolf with long razor fangs. Its eyes are black pits of night that can steal your soul if you look straight at them, and its breath can freeze you where you stand.
>
> "All night the beast paces around the Giant's Table, waiting for his master to come home. But when his master doesn't show, and skies begin to lighten with the dawn, the beast howls silently before melting into the shadows. If you look at the soil the next day, there isn't a trace of a footprint anywhere."
>
> The old man draws from his pipe and blows a heavy blue smoke-ring at the ceiling. "The beast'll steal your soul if you go up there." The old man points his pipe stem toward Hraemar, who is sitting across the room, and whispers, "It's got its fangs deep in *his* soul, mark my words."

Part of what the old fisherman says is true, but it is heavily colored by the tales villagers have created to explain the beast. Every night an immense, glowing white apparition of a wolf appears and paces around the Giant's Table. Contrary to village lore, it is not waiting for its master (who the villagers believe is the giant who built the table). The elf buried in the Giant's Table created this powerful illusion immediately before his death to protect his grave from desecration.

The illusion can neither give nor receive damage, although it always faces the closest medium-sized living creature. More than 200 years ago, when the illusion was cast, the magic was strong enough to detect medium-sized creatures during the day as well. However, since the spell depends on heat to function, it works best when the victim's heat is in strong contrast to a cold background, as occurs at night or in winter.

If the PC attempts to *detect evil,* the apparition radiates nothing—it is merely intended to frighten people away from the tomb. Anyone looking into its eyes must save vs. fear or flee. With a successful saving throw, the PC merely suffers a −1 penalty to all die rolls for 10 rounds, a result of nervous agitation. If the PC views the area in the daylight, no apparition is visible and no saving throw is necessary.

The encounter with Galvin Perth tests the PC's compassion. If the PC ignores Galvin's plea and instead explores the lighthouse, the cat will die from exposure during the night. Starting the following morning, Galvin will use minor magic to hamper the PC in his investigation; without his cat, Galvin has no reason to go on living. If the PC rescues the cat (see the "Giant's Table"), Galvin rewards him with a *wand of enemy detection* (four charges). He teaches the PC the wand's command phrase ("Who goes there?") and what the wand does (though Galvin does not know how many charges are left).

Hraemar Norbatr, Keeper of the Light: AL N; AC 10; MV 8; M3; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 6, D 11, C 8, I 16, W 10, Ch 14; ML 8; knife. Spells: *affect normal fires, dancing lights; pyrotechnics.*

After Hraemar finishes his tale, run "The Rescue." (See the "Village Encounters" sidebar.)

B3. Quarters.

> Another fireplace burns in this stone-walled room. There are three tables and six rough sleeping pallets, one of which has been cleaned up for your use.

These sleeping quarters are maintained for stranded sailors and fishermen visiting from the neighboring islands. No one else will be sleeping in this room during the PC's stay.

B4. Kitchen.

> Stone ovens, shelves of foodstuffs and tableware, and barrels of ale mark this room as the kitchen.

There is always somebody in here, cooking or cleaning. The kitchen is short of flour, a result of the shipping problems stemming from the haunted lighthouse. Fish soup is the main fare these days, supplemented occasionally by fresh seal or whale meat.

B5. Well.

> The air in this tiny room is cold and damp. A rope, nailed to the wall with a heavy iron spike, leads down into a 3′-wide pit.

This 100′-deep well supplies fresh water for the gathering hall. The stone surrounding the well acts as a filter, removing most of the salt from the water.

B6. Lavatories.

> A heavy piece of walrus hide covers the entrance to this narrow passage, and you feel a draft of cold air when you enter. Each of the four small chambers here contains a dark and foul smelling pit. Fresh air blows in through holes in the ceiling.

B7. Dwelling.

A large room houses sleeping pallets, chests, a small oven, and a hearth. A hide flap covers the main entrance. Stairs cut into the rock lead to the surface.

The village dwellings are all essentially identical. The small chamber attached to each room is a lavatory, simply a deep pit cut into the limestone. The families live in spartan comfort, each one sharing the single room among all its members. None of the families have any wealth to speak of.

B8. Candle Alcove.

Another alcove has been carved into the rock wall here. Half a dozen stone bowls are stacked to one side next to a basket containing several candlefish and some flint.

B9. Communal Well.

The air is cold and damp in this room. In the center is a wide, deep well. Three long coils of rope are connected to three buckets that hang suspended from individual pulleys mounted to the ceiling beams. Judging from the rope, you would guess that the well is over 50′ deep.

This room houses the well where all the villagers draw their water. Three buckets allow more than one villager to draw water at once.

C. Whaling Station.

A small circular hut stands alone on this thin, desolate stretch of rocky beach. Built of dull gray stone, wood, and huge bleached bones, the structure has a ghastly appearance. In front of it stand four mounds of stone, each roughly 2′ high, 1′ wide, and 6′ long. A thick, gelatinous scum covers the beach south of the hut. Thousands of tiny crabs scurry across this strand, voraciously feeding on the mess.

The whaling station is both a storage area and a processing site for the whalers. The hut contains several empty kegs and two immense bronze cauldrons suspended from heavy iron tripods. When the men aren't hunting, their bone harpoons, ropes, and hide floats are stored here, and their kayaks are secured to the mounds out front. The whalers spend most daylight hours on the sea but can always be found near the hut at dusk, when they clean and stow their equipment.

The PC may be interested in the spare inflatable seal-hide bladders stored in the hut. The whalers tie these to their harpoon lines, both to exhaust a whale through drag and to prevent the dead whale from sinking. The PC may find a bladder useful as a flotation device for swimming to the lighthouse island. The whalers will give the PC one if asked.

The cauldrons are used to render the blubber of the whales the men capture. They are set up on the beach over blazing fires. When the blubber is reduced to oil, it is poured into the kegs. Where it splashes, it forms the thick mess on the beach, food for the crabs.

D. Deadwood Strand. Piles of storm-tossed driftwood are scattered across this rocky stretch of beach. During the day, several children busily gather wood to take back to the village. They carry the smaller pieces to a cart on the plateau and drag the larger logs close to the shore during low tide, where they lash the beams together. The children tie the resulting raft to a large rowboat anchored offshore. When the tide comes in, the strongest children tow the raft to the harbor. Much wood washes up after heavy storms, but it is quickly taken to the village.

At the moment, the beach is littered not only with logs but also with driftwood from the wreck of the *Seahorse*. Planks, belaying pins, and pieces of hemp rope are scattered along the length of the beach. If the PC takes time to examine this flotsam and jetsam, he will see that it is from a recent wreck, as the tar and paint is reasonably fresh.

E. The Sisters.

A trio of blackened, massive, wind-twisted oaks stands at the foot of a 70′-high cliff. The branches, some as thick as a man, are bare except for a scattering of withered, rust-colored leaves. The thinner branches dance as a moaning wind howls over the land.

These trees have long been dead but are resistant to decay. The "leaves" are actually five stirges, the remnants of a colony that has been harassing the shepherd's flock. The stirges attack any creature that comes within 30′ of the trees. The path is the only route to the Giant's Table (area F). The cliffs are steep but can be climbed safely.

Stirges (5): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 5, 3 (×2), 2 (×2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MM/332.

The stirges will attack the PC if he comes within 30′ of the trees, which he must do if he hopes to reach the Giant's Table. However, a shepherd is always nearby during the day, tending the flock of hardy island sheep. The stirge colony has been harassing Taran's flock for several months, and he has become quite effective with his sling. He will gladly assist the PC if the stirges attack, for he wants them all dead.

Taran: AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 16, C 10, I 7, W 8, Ch 10; ML 10; sling (specialized), quarterstaff.

Taran prefers the company of his flock to any human friends. At no time will he speak to the PC. Though he will not warn the PC of the stirge presence, he will help the PC fight them.

F. Giant's Table. The PC should meet Galvin Perth (see the village encounter, "An Old Man's Best Friend") before investigating this area. To reach the Giant's Table, the PC must first pass the Sisters and the stirges (area E), then climb the steep ledge up the low cliff that leads to the plateau. Read the following description when the PC approaches the Giant's Table.

> In the middle of a barren, windblown plateau stands an ancient monument. A huge granite slab, 50′ across, rests atop three smaller upright slabs, each about 15′ in height. A pile of dirt and small rocks surrounds the entire structure, rising halfway up the vertical rock slabs. The monument's center looks hollow. Your approach startles a cat resting on the dirt pile, and it flees into the shadowy center of the structure.

The cat is Galvin's familiar. It flees down the hole at area F1, only to get captured in the spider web at area F4.

F1. The Hollow.

> The center of the Giant's Table is dark and gloomy, the air tainted by a lingering fetid stench. The inner faces of the upright rocks are chiselled with strange curving designs. The floor of this chamber is smooth stone, littered with generations of debris. Part of the floor has collapsed, leaving an evil-smelling hole gaping into the unknown depths below.

The carvings are ancient ritual designs of elvish origin. If the PC has proficiency in ancient history, a successful check indicates he recognizes the designs as similar to those inscribed on ancient elvish jewelry. The entire Giant's Table is actually a massive burial monument for an elf who was journeying through these islands more than two centuries ago, retracing the voyage of a mythical adventurer. The hole leads into area F2, below.

F2. Staircase.

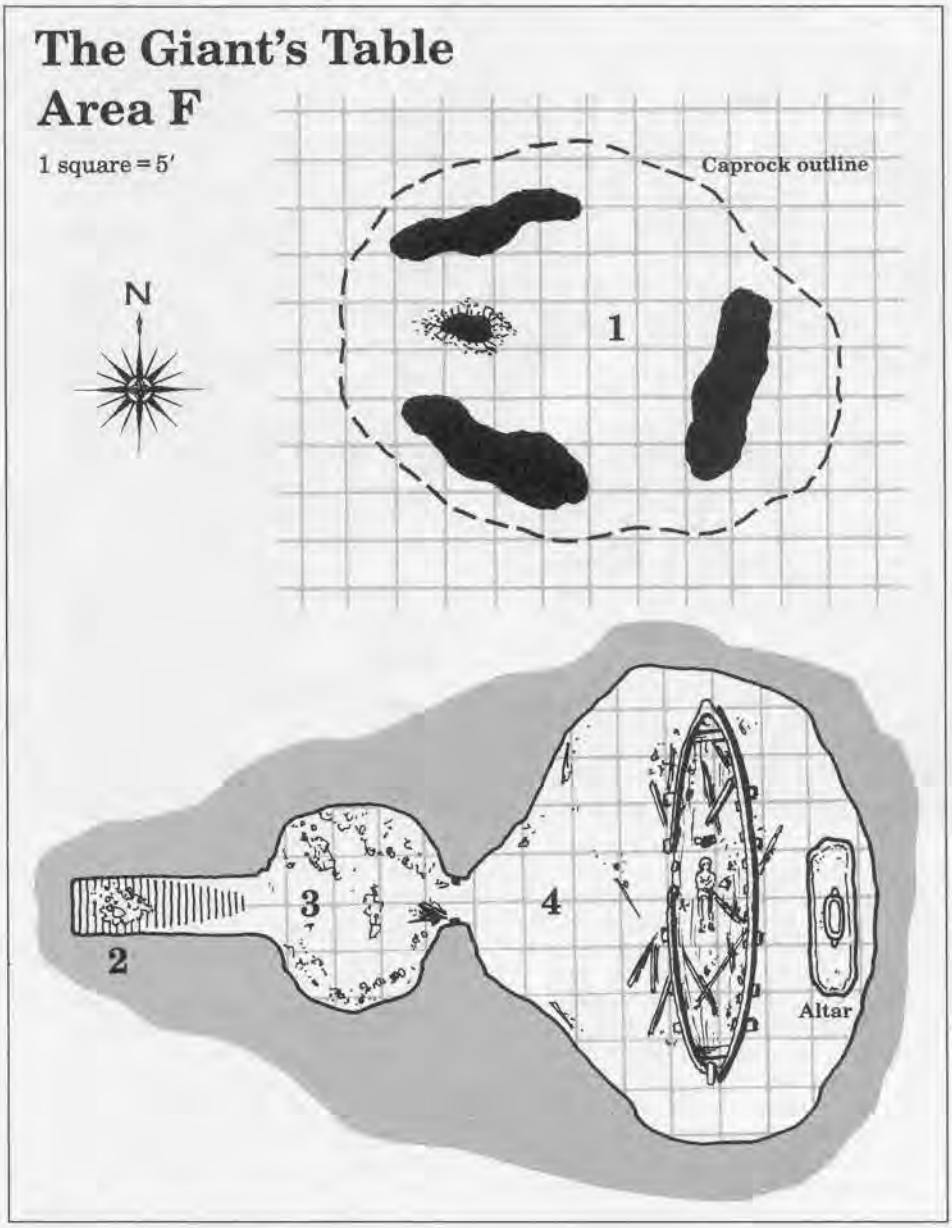
> Dropping through the hole, you find yourself on a cracked stone staircase. A pile of rubble on the floor has fallen from the ceiling. The air is dank and musty, with a pungent hint of bat guano. A cat's loud hissing breaks the silence. It sounds as if it is coming from beyond a narrow opening at the base of the stairs.

F3. Antechamber.

> The stench of bat guano is powerful here, as the floor is covered with an inch of the pungent stuff. Scores of beetles and worms borrow through it, making the floor seem alive and pulsating. Ahead of you, the decaying remains of a thick wooden door lie on the ground, revealing the entrance to another cold, dark chamber.

If the PC is visiting here at night, there are no bats. However, if it is day, four small brown bats can be seen roosting here. They are quite harmless, the last survivors of a colony of bats that has fallen prey to the large spider in area F4.

Bat, common (4): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD ¼; hp 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA swarm; SZ T; ML 3; XP 15; MM/15.



F4. Burial Room.

The doorway opens onto a larger chamber, chilled by the cold, stale air. In the center of the room lie the decaying remains of a large and elegant boat, unlike anything you have ever seen before. Although more than half of the boat has rotted away, you can tell that it was once a fine vessel. The bronze-colored wood from which it is crafted seems to have grown in the shape of the vessel. An ivory bowsprit, 4' long, juts forward from the bow in elegant rest. Whoever built this boat was a master of his craft.

In the northeast corner of the room you see the hissing, struggling cat that brought you to this place. Caught in a large spider web, the cat is fighting desperately to escape from the 2'-wide spider that is slowly making its way down the web.

The large spider will attack the cat in one round unless the PC distracts the arachnid.

Large spider: INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MM/326-327.

Cat (wizard's familiar): INT Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD ½; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1 (claws/bite); SA rear claw rake (1-2 hp); SD surprised only on 1 or 2; SZ T; ML 9; XP 7 (if rescued); MM/38.

After the spider has been disposed of, the cat is easily freed and will return home to Galvin. If the PC examines the boat more closely, read the following.

The highly decayed timbers of the boat suggest its great age. Stretched out within the boat is an elven skeleton. Flowing silver hair streams from the confines of a delicate silver helm. A shirt of gleaming chain mail covers the skeleton's torso. A silver chain is tied around its waist, and the hilt of a sheathed sword is clutched in one frail skeletal hand adorned with a ring made of braided strands of silver and gold. At the foot of the skeleton sits a small gold box, its top covered with a beautiful, flowing script.

The treasure in this holy tomb is extremely valuable and presents a test of the priest's character. A *detect evil* spell reveals no evil presence. In fact, the priest can sense that this is a holy place, despite the villagers' warnings.

Removing items from this burial chamber may cause a change of alignment, particularly in a lawful-good character. However, a priest who worships a god of thievery, wealth, fortune, or mischief may be rewarded for removing the items. Furthermore, part of the treasure is a *cursed* scroll that ensures the sanctity of the tomb.

The treasure includes a normal silver helm worth 50 gp, an elf-sized suit of elven chain mail, a *sword +1 luck blade,* and a *ring of animal friendship.* The chest, worth 120 gp, contains the remnants of the elf's spell components (now spoiled), two gems worth 50 gp each, and a *cursed* scroll. The scroll's curse is the DM's choice; its effects can include blindness, permanent nausea similar to severe seasickness, or severe arthritis of the hands that prevents spell-casting. If the PC has an ancient language proficiency in elvish, he may be able to read the poem that adorns the chest:

Beneath the silver moon I ride the ocean's tide,
The journey of my lifetime just begun.
Onward, to the land of warming sun,
To stand at Tendrist's side.

The skeleton is that of an elvish lord who died at the age of 500 years.

An altar stands on the far wall opposite the entrance. An immense silver cauldron decorated with several carved figures rests on the altar. If the PC examines the cauldron closely, he notices that the carvings tell a story. They show a boat sailing on rough seas, a cave entrance in a mountain beneath a bright shining star, a valley filled with strange animals, and finally a brook in the middle of a forest. The scenes represent landmarks of a journey to a realm recorded in the Saga of Tendrist, an ancient piece of elven lore. The elf lord buried here was retracing Tendrist's journey when he died. The cauldron itself weighs 120 lbs. and is too large and awkward for a single person to carry.

G. Lighthouse Island. This low, rocky island is the Keeper's home and provides the only access to the lighthouse. The lighthouse itself stands on a small isle separated from the larger island at high tide by 25' of water. The

following description refers to the Lighthouse Island map.

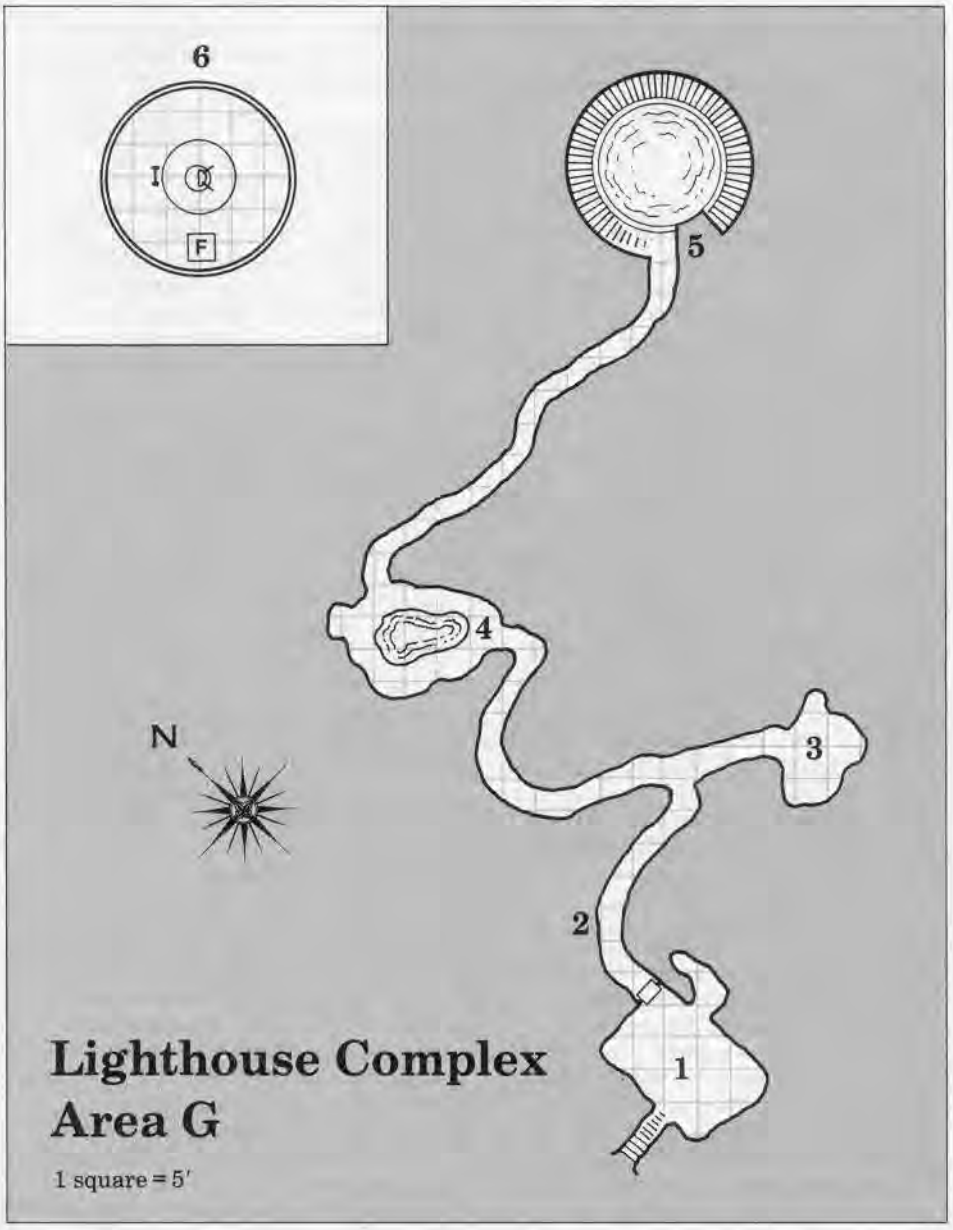
Before playing this section, the DM should be familiar with the poltergeist's behavior. This particular poltergeist is free to roam anywhere around the lighthouse, including the Keeper's house, and will do everything in its power to frighten off the PC. Possibilities include hurling rats at the PC, dropping a small anchor on him while he is climbing the tower, shaking the tower staircase violently as he climbs, stealing items, extinguishing the PC's light source, untying his boat, or anything else the DM can dream up. The DM must decide when, where, and how the poltergeist harasses the PC. However, the poltergeist should try to *cause fear* before the PC reaches area G6. Furthermore, the poltergeist avoids combat until it has created the *phantom shift*. (See area G6.)

Poltergeist: INT low; AL LE; AC 10; MV 6; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA fear; SD invisibility, silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 10; XP 120; MM/296.

Getting to the lighthouse island will be difficult for the PC. None of the villagers are willing to row him across the water. The PC will have to borrow a boat and row himself, or perhaps swim. Boating requires one successful seamanship check. Failure means that the boat capsizes as it turns crosswise to the waves, forcing the PC to swim. If the PC attempts to swim to the island or is capsized, see the rules on swimming in the *Player's Handbook*, pages 120-121.

Read the following when the PC approaches the lighthouse:

> A narrow entrance cut into its side marks the turf mound before you as the Keeper's residence. Far behind it, rising from the cliff's edge, is the stone lighthouse tower. No life can be seen in the vicinity, not even gulls.



G1. House.

> Descending the narrow stone steps, you find yourself in a one-room dwelling similar to those of the village. A stone hearth sits in the middle of the floor, with a raised bed nearby. An iron pot, half filled with stagnant water, hangs from a tripod above the hearth. A wooden door is ornately carved with swirling flame designs. A narrow opening in one wall leads to a lavatory. The harpoon that the Keeper claims was hurled at him is nowhere in sight.

This is where the Keeper lives. It is like any other dwelling on the island, designed with necessity in mind. There is nothing of value here. The wooden door, unlocked, leads to the rest of the complex. The poltergeist took the harpoon away and put it in area G6, to use to frighten off the villagers.

G2. Passageway.

> The low, narrow, stone passage bores into the rocky interior of the island, splitting into two passages about 50' from the Keeper's house. High-pitched squeaking and a vile stench come from the passage on your right. The uneven, natural floor of this passage climbs at a slight angle. To the left, the tunnel twists down into darkness. A steady, monotonous dripping echoes through the passage, and the air wafting toward you is extremely cold and damp.

The steep grade of the descending tunnel makes it hazardous to move rapidly through it. Anyone running must make a Dexterity check or risk falling.

G3. Storage Room.

A short passage leads you to a low-ceilinged chamber, the source of both the smell and the squeaking. Several barrels, kegs, and sacks are loosely stacked along the walls. Many of the sacks are split, spilling their contents of fungus-covered oats onto the uneven floor. Hordes of rats greedily devour the food, and the smell of rat droppings is heavy in the air.

The room contains five barrels of fresh water, two of pickled herring, one smaller keg containing cheese, five kegs of strong ale, and nine sacks of oats, six of which the rats have gotten into.

Rats, common black (56): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA disease; SZ T; ML 3; XP 7; MM/300.

The rats avoid the PC as much as possible, though they will attack if disturbed. As long as food remains readily available, they will never venture far from this room, except to return to their lairs located in the walls.

G4. Cleansing Room.

The steep, slippery passage takes you deep into the island before ending in a pocket of frigid air. The room, a natural cavern, is roughly circular. Stalactites, glimmering with moisture, hang from the high ceiling. A natural pool, 15′ wide, lies in the middle of the chamber, gentle rings rippling the surface as a steady flow of drops falls from the ceiling. A large stone chest, its lid slightly ajar, sits in a small alcove. Another passageway leads from the chamber. Near this exit lies a white headdress with a silver mask.

This is the Keeper's cleansing room, where he washes away the darkness of the spirit before ascending the tower to set the lights. The water is clear and cold, the pool about 12′ deep. The chest is empty, though it usually contains the items the Keeper uses in his ritual. One of these items is the headdress and mask. The eyes of the mask are equipped with *eyes of the eagle* to help the Keeper see incoming ships. The Keeper tossed it here during his flight from the poltergeist.

G5. Lighthouse.

The narrow passage opens onto a tiled foyer. A carved ivory tusk lies on the floor. A spiral staircase, made of wood and iron, rises to the left. Looking up, you see that the stairs rise beyond the limit of your light. This must be the lighthouse.

A 25′-wide shaft descends through the center of the tower. Thirty feet down you can barely make out the water's surface, small waves lapping gently against the stone walls.

The stairs make 10 complete revolutions of the tower, rising 80′ from this level before reaching area G6. The ivory tusk, worth 75 gp, is a nonmagical item that the Keeper uses in his ritual of lighting the beacon. The poltergeist may try to frighten the PC off as the cleric climbs the stairs, perhaps pushing him into the water below. Generations ago, the builders of the lighthouse carved a series of handles into the stone wall that rises from the water.

G6. The Light Deck.

An oaken trapdoor at the top of the stairs opens onto the working level of the lighthouse. As you stick your head out of the trapdoor, a sharp breeze bites into your skin. Emerging from the stairs, you find yourself on an open platform with a commanding view of the surrounding islands and sea. A stone pillar, 10′ wide, stands erect in the center of the platform. Elaborate carvings decorate the pillar, depicting scenes of ships seeking the safety of harbor. In all the scenes, a lighthouse acts as a beacon of safety. An iron ladder, bolted securely to the pillar, rises to its top.

The Keeper stands his post nightly on this deck. Wearing the mask with *eyes of the eagle,* he maintains a lookout for incoming ships. As the ships approach the narrow passage, the Keeper casts *affect normal fires* on the beacon to increase its brightness. He then casts *dancing lights* (in the form of four lanterns) above the submerged reef that lies 50 yards northeast of the lighthouse, where the *Seahorse* crashed and sank. Finally, when the ship is safely through the passage and far enough away not to suffer any ill effects, the Keeper sometimes casts *pyrotechnics* (as fireworks) on a large torch to signal the success of the passage.

When the PC enters this area for the first time, read the following aloud:

As you survey the view from this platform, you notice a sudden change. The sea suddenly erupts into seething turmoil, sending huge waves crashing against the rocky shore of the island. The sky blackens instantly. A fierce wind tears at your clothing. Huge, freezing drops of rain pelt you incessantly, soaking you to the skin.

Stepping around the central pillar, you nearly trip over the slumped body of the Keeper. His semi-conscious form is drenched with water. Pale, bony hands clutch a silver mug. An oak keg, its contents spilled, lies toppled beside the old man. He tries to stand, but cannot.

Looking up, you see a schooner pitching violently on the massive waves beneath the dim glow of the lighthouse beacon. Crewmen struggle to secure wildly flapping sails as the helmsman wrestles with all his strength to keep the vessel on course to safety.

But what safety?

The schooner smashes against a partially submerged reef, unmarked by any lights. Men are thrown from the rigging into the sea's deadly grasp. A mast snaps in two and falls, crushing the helmsman beneath its immense weight. Another wave heaves the schooner up, only to send it crashing down against the reef. Her keel snaps like a twig, and the hull breaks in two. As more men are pulled to the murky depths, the captain climbs to the bow and shakes his fist toward the tower. A wave crashes over him, and his dying scream, like his ship, is swallowed by the sea.

This action happens too quickly for the PC to do much. After the vessel breaks up on the rocks, the *phantom shift* lasts for another four minutes. Pieces of wreckage can be seen floating on the surface, but there is no trace of survivors. The Keeper remains in his

Continued on page 58

FRAGGART'S CONTRAPTION

BY WILLIE WALSH

It'll work for sure this time. Really.

Artwork by Jim Holloway

Willie spent 1991/92 helping with an Adult Literacy Scheme in his native Dublin, Ireland, with the result his writing output was drastically reduced. This module marks his return to these pages after the "lean times" of 1993. It's Willie's 17th appearance in DUNGEON® adventures.

"Fraggart's Contraption" is an AD&D® scenario for six player characters of levels 1-2 (8-10 total levels). If there are insufficient players, the PCs might instead be 3rd level; if more play, perhaps all the PCs should be 1st level. All character classes should be represented, if possible, with several demihumans in the group. Alignments should be good rather than evil.

Set off the beaten track, this module can be included as a small adventure in any low-level campaign. It features an unusual, though limited, magical item that may either help or hinder the PCs, depending on its peculiar mechanical whims.

Adventure Background

Bandits lurk in the hills of many countries. The chance of encountering these hit-and-run merchants is greater the nearer one is to a caravan trail and the farther one is from a town.

One group of bandits, led by a dim-witted half-ogre named Mogun, recently ambushed a caravan. The inept highwaymen foolishly drove off the pack animals through poor planning, got some of their own number killed, and swiped very little loot. The best they could do was grab a few riding mules and one hostage, a gnome named Fraggart who was on his way to visit relatives in the area. The mules later escaped, but the bandits hoped to hold Fraggart for ransom. A note was scribbled to that effect and left under a convenient rock, where it was found by a passing shepherd. The bandits and their reluctant prisoner retired to their hideout to await developments.

Two weeks later the ransom was paid, but Fraggart never showed up. Instead, another letter arrived, this time in the gnome's own handwriting:

> *Dear Cousins,*
>
> *I thank you profusely for your payment to secure my release, but I will not be returning to civilization at present, as I've discovered something that has captured (sorryl) my interest.*
>
> *I can't say more, but I hope to return in triumph soon!*
>
> *Cousin Fraggart*

Fraggart's kin were understandably upset and confused, as well as 500 gp the poorer. When two months had elapsed without any sign of the gnome, they contacted the local knights and explained their problem. On reading the letter, and listening to the tale, the knights said they could do nothing. The contract between the bandits and the relatives had been properly executed when the ransom was paid. It was obvious Fraggart did not wish to return, and they could hardly be expected to kidnap him back! So the clan resolved to use the remainder of their fortune (1,000 gp) to hire adventurers to find the gnome and, if not return him to the bosom of his family, at least get a proper explanation for his prolonged absence.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

Fraggart was naturally loath to be held by Mogun and his folk when first kidnapped, but he was permitted no means of escape, and the half-ogre paid little heed to protests or curses. What's more, Fraggart was expected to amuse himself around camp, which didn't even have a decent minstrel to pass the time. So the gnome explored the lair of the bandits, a bear's cave converted to a barely habitable shelter. There, much to his surprise, Fraggart discovered the paradise-on-earth of gnomekind, a fully outfitted laboratory and workshop left by some long-forgotten wizard!

But best of all were the dust-covered plans: drawings and descriptions of a machine the likes of which had never, to Fraggart's knowledge, been seen in the world before.

Naturally, he resolved to build it. Mogun was surprised when Fraggart refused to go home when the ransom was paid. He was even more surprised to receive a shopping list (which was carefully explained to him, and written down very slowly, as Fraggart knew the half-ogre couldn't read very fast) of items to filch in future raids. Fraggart demanded copper, silver, ink, paper, fine cloth, tools, and as much weaponry and armor as Mogun's party could steal from fallen caravan guards. In return, Fraggart promised to create a machine in which the bandits could be impervious to attack, a machine the gnome had already dubbed "Fraggart's Contraption."

For the Player Characters

The PCs begin this adventure when approached by Gruble, Kronkile, Nilker, and Frunge, who are the gnomish task force sent to find adventurers. This meeting can be tailored to suit the DM's campaign by taking place either as a wilderness encounter (the gnomes are traveling to the next town to hire a search party), or as the more usual approach while sojourning in a town or city.

The following boxed description uses the wilderness-encounter premise. The PCs are assumed to be in the wilds on a journey of their own. The DM can adapt this introduction to fit the current campaign situation.

> The weather is fine, and you have been making good time on the overland trek this past while. It now seems you'll arrive with a few days to spare, days in which you might rest and recuperate from the long trip.
>
> One morning, not far from the goal of the trek, you are approached by four small humanoids who seem to be dressed all in pine needles!

In fact, the pine needles are sewn painstakingly onto normal clothing, and are Gruble's idea. He thought that the gnomes should be disguised as part of the wilderness if they're to travel there. After all, they don't want monsters to detect them too easily. The trouble is, the gnomes all look ridiculous and smell of pine. Kronkile is allergic and sneezes loudly every few minutes, negating any benefits of camouflage.

Gruble is the almost-agreed-upon leader. Fraggart's true cousin, Nilker, didn't agree, so the position isn't unanimously appointed. Gruble begins by welcoming the PCs to the camp (even though he's the visitor!) and inviting them to take tea. Whether or not the PCs are friendly, the gnomes dump out their large packs onto the ground, clanking and clattering five times as loud as necessary. The upended contents include billy cans, tin cups, spoons, wrenches, a half-eaten pickle, and numerous packets of tea leaves (most previously used). While the other three set about lighting some rather environmentally unsound campfires, Gruble begins his tale of Fraggart, elaborating upon the ransom payment and the gnome's refusal to come home. There is a noncumulative 25% chance per round that he or one of his companions will begin to smoulder during the tale, as the town-dwelling gnomes try to keep their fires under control.

Gruble stands about 2'8" high, two of these inches added by platform shoes with curly toes. He has the typical white hair, tanned complexion, and large nose of gnomekind.

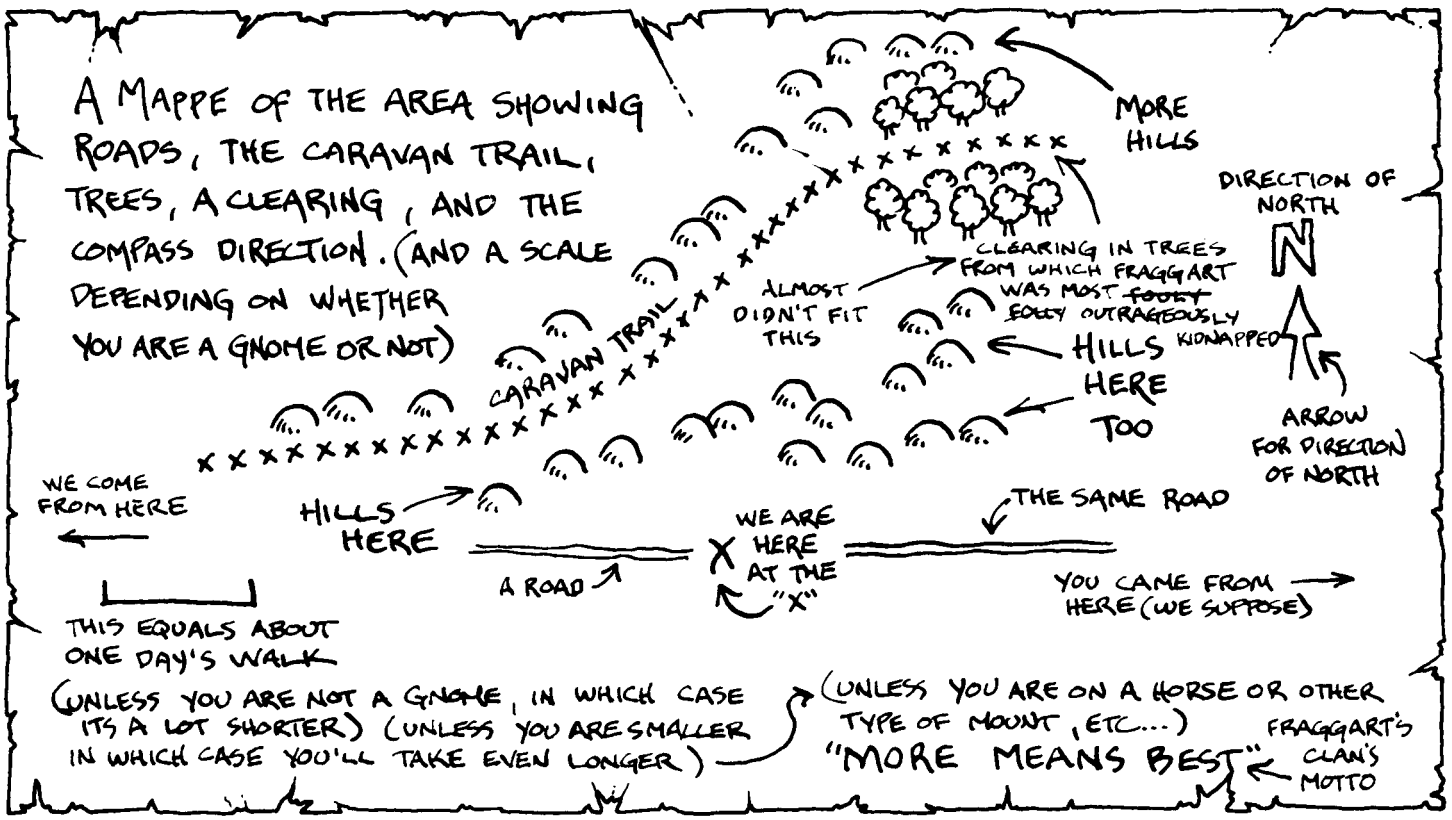
At home, Gruble spends most of his time in his garden shed, as his interests lie in gardening and gardening tools. He recently invented a six-bladed shears "for faster clipping." This device has cost him a bundle in research and *regeneration* spells, as it has a tendency to chop whatever gets in its way, including fingers. Nevertheless, Gruble is convinced that his device is the future of horticultural harvesting, and that he has only to "iron out a few problems" before he can sell the idea to a blacksmith and make back all the money he's spent.

Gruble is anxious that Fraggart be found, and indeed it was his agitation that made the gnomish community finally agree to contribute toward hiring someone to look for him. The other gnomes were of the opinion that it served Fraggart right if he got eaten by something, and that they shouldn't be involved in getting him back when his own clan had so miserably (and expensively) failed.

Gruble isn't directly related to the missing Fraggart, but he wants Fraggart's advice on the multi-shears. Simply disposing of four of the six blades would be a major improvement, but neither Fraggart nor Gruble will be anxious to do this. "More Means Best" is the grammatically suspect motto of Fraggart's clan.

Gruble is allowed to offer the PCs up to 1,000 gp, payable on receipt of Fraggart alive, and reasonably well, within 30 days. However he'll begin by offering 200 gp and is willing to haggle up to his limit. He doesn't know what to do if the PCs insist on more than 1,000 gp, but if this happens, each of the others has been given two potions to add to the pot (each gnome thinks he is the only one to have received the potions). In order, Kronkile, Nilker, and Frunge will step in with additional bargaining power, taking great pleasure in the obvious surprise of their fellows as they do so.

Gruble, gnome: AL CG; AC 7; MV 6; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit kobolds and goblins; SD −4 on attacks from giant-class creatures; +3 on saves vs. spells


A MAPPE OF THE AREA SHOWING ROADS, THE CARAVAN TRAIL, TREES, A CLEARING, AND THE COMPASS DIRECTION. (AND A SCALE DEPENDING ON WHETHER YOU ARE A GNOME OR NOT)
MORE HILLS
DIRECTION OF NORTH
N
CLEARING IN TREES FROM WHICH FRAGGART WAS MOST FOULY OUTRAGEOUSLY KIDNAPPED
ALMOST DIDN'T FIT THIS
CARAVAN TRAIL
HILLS HERE TOO
ARROW FOR DIRECTION OF NORTH
WE COME FROM HERE
HILLS HERE
THE SAME ROAD
WE ARE HERE AT THE "X"
A ROAD
YOU CAME FROM HERE (WE SUPPOSE)
THIS EQUALS ABOUT ONE DAY'S WALK
(UNLESS YOU ARE NOT A GNOME, IN WHICH CASE IT'S A LOT SHORTER) (UNLESS YOU ARE SMALLER IN WHICH CASE YOU'LL TAKE EVEN LONGER)
(UNLESS YOU ARE ON A HORSE OR OTHER TYPE OF MOUNT, ETC...)
"MORE MEANS BEST"
FRAGGART'S CLAN'S MOTTO

and poison; S 15, D 15, C 13, I 15, W 9, Ch 15; ML 12; MM/159.

Gruble carries a short sword. His clothing amounts to padded armor but suffers a −5 penalty against fire-based attacks. He keeps a pocket full of credit notes, requiring his signature to be made valid. These notes can be redeemed at any gnomish bank for a total of 1,000 gp.

Kronkile could be Gruble's twin, except that he is even shorter, at a neat 2' tall. (Forest gnome blood is said to run in his family.) He is a personal friend of Fraggart and can describe him in great detail (small, gnomish sized and shaped, behaves and dresses like a gnome, etc.). He warns the PCs that Fraggart has an even greater passion for inventions than most gnomes, so if they find him, they should try to keep any mechanical or magical items out of his reach. Fraggart is renowned for taking things apart but being unable to put them back together again, "improved" or not.

Kronkile carries two potions made by the gnomes. One is a potion of *healing* that is 50% likely to be a normal fluid of that type and 50% likely to bestow the effects of a *super-heroism* potion, due to a slight error in its distillation. The gnomes are unaware of the error and won't detect it unless the potion is consumed. The second potion provides *gaseous form,* though it too is flawed. The person who drinks this potion is 50% likely each round to "reassemble" for one round, then turn *gaseous* for another few rounds. This process repeats itself until the duration expires (1d4 +4 turns). The DM shouldn't reveal more than the name of each potion until a PC uses one. The adventurers shouldn't blame the bestower of the potions unduly. It's not his fault that the liquids were made up improperly.

Kronkile thinks it's wise to have Gruble as their leader and voted him into the position. This isn't because of any misplaced trust, however. He believes that he himself can get up to more mischief while Gruble is busy being self-important. Kronkile shows a special interest in any complicated or magical devices the PCs might already possess. If none are available, he will busy himself with sketching out a new mechanism he has been thinking of for crossbowmen.

The mechanism isn't for the bows themselves. He has a plan to mount the bowmen on a large metal arm, tied (safely, of course) by the feet so that they can be rotated, barrel-wise. While one set of bowmen is reloading, the others are moved into position ready to fire. Trials with halflings have so far proved inconclusive, the volunteers bringing up their lunches rather than spending the time upside down to recock their bows.

Kronkile is part of the task force because Fraggart owes him 200 gp, money he hopes to collect from the gnome later. He has decided that Fraggart must have found some great treasure in the wilds and expects a share. He will not impart this information to the PCs, though, as he doesn't want the other gnomes to discover his deduction.

Where Gruble is pompous and wants to run everything, Kronkile is furtive and sly. The PCs might feel it necessary to keep a good eye on him during the interview, as he's always picking up items and examining them. He isn't a thief, however, just nervous and edgy with the thought of gaining "Fraggart's treasure" for himself.

Kronkile, gnome: AL NG; AC 7; hp 5;

S 14, D 17, C 12, I 16, W 10, Ch 8; other statistics as for Gruble; short sword, potions of *healing* and *gaseous form*. (See text.)

Nilker, Fraggart's true cousin, carries a potion of *levitation* and one of *flight*. The potion of *levitation* is ordinary except for a horrid smell that, when the bottle is unstoppered, is 25% likely to alert anyone within a 100-yard radius that the would-be imbiber is about. Otherwise, the potion works normally.

The potion of *flight* has one annoying side effect. Unless the imbiber makes a saving throw vs. poison, he immediately sprouts small white feathers all over his body. These can be removed by a *neutralize poison* spell, or they will molt naturally in 2-12 days, but the PC cannot use them to fly. The potion works normally except for this small complication. Nilker knows the names of the potions but not their unusual properties.

Fraggart's cousin resembles Gruble and Frunge, though his motivation for hiring the adventurers comes from his strong family ties to the missing gnome. His particular clan holds that all knowledge within the family should be preserved, so any relative who is in trouble must be helped in order to preserve that knowledge.

Nilker doesn't trust Gruble, who obviously wants help with his invention, nor Kronkile, who is always penny-pinching and talking about who owes him money. His friend, Frunge, though a little stupid, is the only person in the task force whom Nilker will confide in.

Nilker's interests lie in the building industry as it applies to gnomes (tunnelling and burrowing, with the odd bit of mining thrown in). He is adept at misreading plans, which invariably gets him into trouble both personally and financially, which is perhaps why he doesn't like to be reminded of money matters by Kronkile. Because of Nilker's casual attitude toward maps, Gruble is the one who has drawn a sketch of the location where they reckon Fraggart is being held, much to Nilker's chagrin.

Nilker, gnome: AL LG; hp 8; S 12, D 12, C 12, I 13, W 9, Ch 13; other statistics as for Gruble; dagger, potions of *levitation* and *flight*. (See text for details.)

Frunge is an object of pity and condescension. Out of his hearing, the other gnomes call him "Poor Old Frunge." Frunge has been given two potion bottles, but they contain only water, as it was considered unsafe to trust him with anything more valuable. He believes they are "potions of thirst quenching" and is very proud to be carrying them.

Frunge suffers from a low Intelligence, and a below-average Wisdom (below average for a gnome, which is *really* bad!) but he does have great loyalty to his friend Nilker, in particular, and all gnomes in general. He thinks it very sad that Fraggart is separated from his kith and kin, and he will try to make friends with gnomes, dwarves, halflings, elves, half-elves, and humans (in that order of preference). He'll offer his two "potions" to those individuals he prefers instead of lumping them with the general reward monies to be divided as the PCs see fit.

Frunge joins in the negotiations only as a last resort, as experience has shown him that speaking his piece too soon brings scorn from his companions, who, though no great shakes themselves, consider themselves made of superior stuff.

Frunge, gnome: AL NG; hp 6; S 17 (+1, +1), D 16, C 12, I 4, W 4, Ch 18; other statistics as for Gruble; dagger, two bottles of water.

Crossing the Wilderness

If the PCs accept the gnomes' proposal to look for Fraggart, Gruble hands them a "carefully drawn map" of the area where the caravan was ambushed, the ransom note was discovered, the ransom was deposited, and Fraggart's letter was later found. He also shows them Fraggart's letter.

The PCs must travel for two days to reach the area where the gnomes believe Fraggart is located. Use the Wilderness Encounter Table for the ever-steeper range of hills along which the trail creeps. Make checks at dawn, noon, dusk, and midnight; a roll of 1 on 1d6 indicates an encounter. Roll 1d10 to see what's encountered, and don't repeat encounters unnecessarily.

At the Caravan Stop

The party eventually comes to a cleared space in the wooded area through which the cart track passes. Caravans often

Wilderness Encounters

Roll 1d10

1. **Caravan scouts** (4): AL LG; AC 6; MV 9; F2; hp 17, 14, 7, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; XP 65; ring mail, shield, short bow, long sword.

Mounted on horseback, Jak, Ten, Silvin, and Marcus are scouts for a caravan on its way to the nearest large settlement. (The PCs will meet this caravan at the caravan stop if they get there in two days, as planned.) If this encounter occurs at night, the PCs see a campfire in the distance or are themselves the subject of investigation, as appropriate. During the day, the foursome is traveling toward the party. If approached openly, the scouts are wary but not hostile.

The scouts can direct the party to the caravan stop where the previous group was ambushed, if the party makes its business known. This reduces the PCs' chance of becoming lost by 30%. (See Tables 81 and 82 on page 128 of the *DMG*.)

2. **Goblins** (12): INT low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 6, 5 (×2), 4, 3 (×2), 2 (×3), 1 (×3); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SZ S (4' tall); ML 10; XP 15; MM/163; short sword, short bow, spear.

If encountered in daylight, these monsters are sheltering on the shaded side of a hill and fight at −1 to attack rolls. During the night they're on the move, looking for rich pickings along the road. The goblins try to ambush the PCs if they gain surprise or have warning of the party's approach, but retreat in disorder if half their force is killed or incapacitated.

3. **Kobolds** (16): INT average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6; HD ½; hp 4 (×7), 3 (×3), 2 (×4), 1 (×2); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or 1-6 (weapon); SZ S (3' tall); ML 9; XP 7; MM/214; short sword, sling, club.

This group is patrolling the outermost border of its territory because it heard that goblins are snooping about. Their lair, about 10 miles away, may be detailed by the DM for future adventures. If the encounter is a daytime one, the kobolds are less fierce, fighting only if attacked (or if gnomes are in the party, in which case they attack on sight) and at −1 to attack rolls. In daylight, they'll seek to parley, to hear if the adventurers have seen any goblins. They also use the opportunity to size the PCs up for possible wounds or weaknesses.

At night, the kobolds are 50% likely to try an opportunistic attack and 50% likely to ignore the party and continue their goblin hunt.

4. **Knights** (4): AL LG; AC 2; MV 6; F4; hp 30, 21, 20, 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; XP 120; plate mail, shield, spear, long sword.

Sir Golden, Sir Brian, Sir Godfrey, and Sir Noble are on patrol. Unless some emergency arises, they do not expect to return to their stronghold for another week. They will be most interested in the PCs' mission, as they've already heard the gnomes' complaint, but as the bandit country is outside their territory, they're powerless to act under the law. They cannot overturn the bandit's contract with the gnomes.

Each knight carries a flask of *healing* potion that he will offer to a wounded PC if he believes the adventurers are honest and law abiding.

The knights will leave to follow the goblins or kobolds if the adventurers mention they've previously encountered them.

5. **Treant:** INT very; AL CG; AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 23; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA animate trees, which attack as 12-HD treants; inflict structural damage on buildings and fortifications; SD never surprised; SZ H (13' tall); ML 16; MM/346.

Shaveling, a young and (for his kind) rambunctious treant, is encountered on his way overland on a trip to meet a druid friend, some 20 miles away. He is unconcerned about the PCs and totally ignores them unless approached, when good manners dictates he must at least greet them. If the PCs attack either Shaveling or any local flora, he retaliates at once.

Shaveling knows the countryside well and can tell the PCs that a wizard named Drin lived in the hills many decades ago. Directions to his lair place it quite close to the caravan stop at which Fraggart's companions were ambushed. Shaveling might add the comment that this would indeed be a likely place to find a gnome; Drin was quite interested in strange inventions.

6. **Pack mule:** INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-2 or 1-6/1-6; SZ M; ML 5; MM/194-195 (Horse).

This encounter occurs at a distance of 10d10 yards from the party. The mule has been wild for the past six weeks, ever since it escaped from the bandits who captured it from Fraggart's caravan. It isn't in great shape, but it still carries four crates with 10d100 gp worth of goods in them.

The crates are marked with the brand of a local merchant. At the DM's option, they may also contain contraband that could lead the PCs into trouble with the authorities, or conflict with the merchant and his dishonest friends at a later date.

The mule is worth 8 gp. If the PCs use a *speak with animals* spell, the mule can say only that it was frightened off by men with swords and torches. Lately, it's felt it has been stalked, a fear that is well founded as wild dogs (see next encounter) are on its trail.

7. **Wild dogs** (10): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 6, 5 (×3), 3, 2 (×2), 1 (×3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ S (3' long); ML 5; XP 35; MM/57 (Dog).

This pack is trailing a mule (see previous encounter) while waiting for it to weaken. The dogs intend to make a good meal soon. They're not so foolhardy as to attack a strong party, but they'll get at least within bowshot to test the PCs defenses. If stood up to, the dogs retreat and do not return.

8. **Ghouls** (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14, 8, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation by touch (save or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds, but elves are immune); SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML 11; XP 175; MM/131.

This trio comes out only after dark, though if the PCs pass their shallow burrows during the day, the ghouls will track them down the following night. They've recently run out of food in a disused graveyard some miles away and are migrating under cover of darkness in search of a new home. They're hungry and attack the party on sight, but if seriously opposed or turned they don't press their luck. The ghouls prefer to melt into the night, where the PCs hear them wailing, cursing, and slavering until dawn.

9. **Blood hawks** (5): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD 1+1; hp 8 (×2), 7, 5, 2; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; SA +2 bonus to attack roll if executing a dive of 200' or more (talon attacks only); SZ S (3'-4' long); ML 11; XP 120; MM/27 (Bird).

This small flock is encountered only during daylight hours. Their tactic is to choose the most striking or colorfully dressed person in the party (if this is hard to determine, choose the PC with the most expensive armor, the greatest number of visible weapons, etc.) and attack him en masse. Their intention is to kill and eat him, later to squabble over any shiny objects their victim might have had. Throwing trinkets by the roadside is 25% likely to distract the blood hawks from attacks while PCs make good their escape.

10. **Obliviax** (memory moss): INT average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 0; HD 2 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA steal memories; SD use stolen spells against attackers; SZ T (6" square); ML 9; XP 35; MM/293-294 (Plant, Intelligent).

This monster plies its trade, hidden among the long grasses by the roadside (only a cumulative 5% chance per round of detection). It tries to steal one person's memories; if successful, it remains inert for another 24 hours, when it will be hungry again.

The obliviax attacks PCs in this preferred order: wizard, priest, other spell-casters, any other class. A PC may regain his memories by finding and eating the moss while successfully saving vs. poison. Failure indicates illness for 3d6 turns; the stolen memories are lost forever unless a *heal* spell is available.

make camp here on long overland treks. It's assumed the PCs arrive at dawn of the third day of their trip. If they arrive earlier or later, they can still find their way to the bandits (or the bandits to them) with little adjustment.

The bandits are a motley group of desperate men. They are poorly equipped and underfed, since the wilderness cannot sustain their large numbers. By and large, they are outlaws who will not or cannot adjust to the rules and regulations of the lawful life. Morale is low, and only Mogun's firm hand and promises of future successes have kept them together while Fraggart builds his contraption.

The half-ogre is not with his men when they make their latest raid on a caravan at the clearing. They are trying to capture food, as Fraggart has declared himself satisfied with the quantities of other goods needed to build his device. The PCs are 50% likely to detect the ambush if they arrive at the caravan stop before the caravan; 90% likely to see its signs if they're late and the caravan has moved on. If the PCs arrive bang on time (dawn of the third day), read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You round a bend in the track to discover a sentry standing with bow bent. He shouts a challenge and orders you to stand still. Behind him you see a clearing in a wooded copse, the open area a hive of activity as carts, mules, and various handlers and soldiers break camp.
>
> Suddenly, you hear a fearsome howl from the trees, and a dozen men break cover to dash toward the camp. The sentry turns away from you, only to receive a crashing blow to the head from a thrown axe. The sounds of fighting can be heard throughout the clearing, mingled with shouts of "Fire! Fire!" and the braying of terrified mules. You see smoke billowing up from some of the carts, and guards rushing over to put out the fires, leaving other goods unattended.

The bandits have lain in ambush all night, observing which goods seemed to be the best guarded and therefore the most likely to be valuable (and therefore not provisions). They have torched the wagons containing valuables with burning oil and are trying to make off with the unattended food while the guards are occupied elsewhere.

If the PCs do nothing, the bandits' plan will succeed. The caravaneers may assume that the party, arriving so coincidentally in time for the ambush, were decoys, and the guards will attack them. If the adventurers join the guards, their sudden appearance forces the bandits to make a Morale Check or disperse into the woods.

Any bandits captured will exchange information for their lives. They do not know much about the contraption, however, as Mogun and Fraggart keep the project secret and have not yet brought it out of the workshop (see area 9D).

All the bandits know that the whole band numbers around 30. They seldom leave fewer than 10 guards at their lair, which is a number of worked caves located a mile or two north of the road. Fraggart was kidnapped on a botched raid at this very caravan stop, and though the ransom of 500 gp was received, he hasn't gone home. The bandits assume that Mogun, their half-ogre leader, has plans for Fraggart, but what those plans are they can only guess.

They also know that Mogun often visits Fraggart in a portion of the hideout that is off-limits, as traps have claimed the odd explorer in the past. Fraggart comes out infrequently, and only to inspect what booty the bandits have come home with.

Mogun has taken all kinds of metal items, pen and ink, and tools into the off-limits area. When he does so, it's often a couple of days before Fraggart reappears, tired and haggard, sometimes filthy or suffering from burns or scalds, but always with an unnerving and ever-increasing fire in his eyes. Rumors are starting that the gnome has been taken over by some malign spirit haunting the dungeon, but Mogun has so far maintained discipline, and no one has yet decided to move on to safer parts.

Now there is a metallic clanking and grinding noise from the off-limits area that the bandits can't explain.

The bandits can give enough information to provide a rough map of the layout of areas 2-6 but not the rest of the wizard's old home (areas 7-9, the off-limits section referred to by the bandits).

A ranger or someone with tracking proficiency (a caravan guard can have this if no one in the party does) can find sets of tracks heading north from the caravan stop. Men carrying burdens have walked here recently. The tracks appear and disappear over the terrain, but always head toward a rocky portion of land. (The tracks end at area 1.)

Caravan guards (20): AL NG; AC 5; MV 9; F1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; chain mail, long sword, short bow, 12 arrows. Ten of these guards rush to extinguish fires when the ambush is sprung.

Bandits (12): AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; F1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; XP 35; club, short bow, 12 arrows, flask of oil, oddments of armor cumulatively giving AC 6.

The Bandits' Lair

1. Entrance to the Gorge.

> The tracks end at a brook that emerges from a gorge. The gorge is deep and relatively hidden from the outside world, but much of the vegetation around it has been cut down. You can see a number of cave entrances along its length. One cave to the west has white smoke curling out of it; another to the east is still and quiet. It's possible the gorge has other caves farther upstream.

The gorge is open to the sky along its entire length. The caves are currently dry, and flood only in wintertime when the water level in the stream rises. The water is now a foot or two deep and is banked on either side by sand and gravel. This means the PCs won't get their feet wet unduly, but movement is reduced by one third because of the uneven and yielding surface. If the PCs decide to charge an enemy while in the gorge, they gain only +1 to attack rolls, rather than +2, though penalties to Armor Class remain the same.

The smoke from the cave to the west comes from Killi's cooking fires in area 2. The cave to the east is area 3.

2. Killi's Cave.

> The tunnel into the rock stops abruptly in a blind cave, filled ceiling to floor with smoke. The flickers of five or six heavily banked fires are visible through the haze.
>
> Above each fire is a wooden rack on which strips of meat are hanging. Sitting near the exit, his back to you, a small figure is placing a handful of wood chips on the nearest fires and wiping its eyes with a bright red handkerchief.

Killi Tangletoes, the bandits' halfling cook, has been told not to light any fires out of doors, to avoid attracting unwelcome company. He's been temporarily banished to this small cave, where he can smoke-cure the bandits' dwindling supply of fresh meat.

PCs who try to sneak up on Killi must make Constitution checks to avoid sneezing and coughing. Those who make their checks gain +2 on surprise, though everyone (including Killi) fights at −1 to attack rolls in the fog of woodsmoke.

If not immediately and quietly put out of action, Killi screams for help, the piercing cry (interrupted by coughing) echoing up the gorge and alerting the remaining bandits to trouble. Unless the party has already slain or disabled the others, two or three bandits arrive in three rounds to investigate. The remainder staying on alert and waiting for the PCs to come to them if their friends fail to return.

Killi is quite satisfied with the life of a bandit, which he took up after his restaurant was repossessed for failure to make the mortgage payments. He has a dislike for what he calls "rich folk" and is pleased to hurt them by accepting his share of any booty the bandits can glean.

The halfling fell in with the bandits when he himself was captured while wandering in the area. On finding he had neither money nor rich relatives who might ransom him, the bandits toyed with the idea of murder, but Killi persuaded them he could be a useful addition to the group and has been with them for the better part of a year now. He's not the greatest of cooks (one reason his restaurant failed), but he's a lot better than what they originally had, which was no cook at all.

If captured, Killi is as cooperative as any other bandit and can direct the PCs to the main bandit lair (area 3) and the secret door leading into the off-limits area that Fraggart inhabits (area 7). If given a chance, he'll try to con the PCs into allowing him join them but will alert the bandits at the first available opportunity if the party is foolish enough to trust him.

Hanging over the fires are the makings of enough rations for 12 men for about two days (in addition to any rations picked up in the most recent raid). As mentioned earlier, the bandits are having trouble keeping everyone fed.

Killi Tangletoes, halfling bandit: AL NE; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with slings and thrown weapons; SD +4 on saving throws vs. wands, staves, rods, spells, and poison; −4 penalty on opponents' surprise rolls; S 15, D 18, C 14, I 15, W 8, Ch 10; ML 12; XP 35; short sword, two throwing daggers.

Killi is not wearing armor when first encountered. He wields his short sword with two hands. His two throwing daggers are strapped to his forearms beneath his shirtsleeves. In a small bag in a smoky corner he has stashed his personal treasure: 25 gp, 12 sp, 30 cp, and a week's worth of pilfered rations.

3. Common Room. This main living area normally holds about 20 people. The DM should subtract any casualties or prisoners from the raid on the caravan stop, and any scouts sent to check on Killi (area 2), from the number of bandits encountered here.

If the PCs have been quiet and stealthy, the bandits are busy sharing out whatever food they managed to steal. While they're occupied, the PCs might find the secret door along the north wall that leads to the off-limits section frequented by Mogun and Fraggart.

While the adventurers stay in or near area 3, they have a cumulative 10% chance per turn to hear the boring machine drilling through the rock at area 9D. Attached to Fraggart's Contraption, the entire machine will emerge 12 hours after the PCs first arrive at the hideout, unless they intercept it. The DM should keep track of time if the PCs fail to keep exploring and hole up somewhere.

3A. Sleeping Area. Most of the bandits sleep here, around an ever-widening drift of ashes where a large fire burns night and day. Fissures in the ceiling dissipate the smoke over a wide area, casting a hazy fog quite unlike a chimney's column of smoke.

Hidden among the bedclothes are personal possessions worth 1,060 gp.

3B. Drinking Water. This large barrel of water holds 10 gallons and has been recently filled. The bucket beside the barrel is used for scooping up water for drinking and bathing.

If the PCs decide to throw the contents of the water barrel onto the fire (perhaps to create a diversion or "smoke screen"), one or two people with a combined Strength of 18 must lift the full container.

It takes one round to reach the barrel and lift it, and one more round to throw it in the proper direction. The DM can allow an attack roll against AC 10. If the PCs score a direct hit on the fire, a great plume of smoky steam erupts. All light and heat from the fire abruptly ceases. The floor becomes flooded with water, and anyone looking in the direction of the smoke must save vs. petrification or be blinded for two melee rounds, fighting at −4 on attack rolls. Even PCs could be blinded, if the plan is ill-prepared. If the PCs miss on their attack roll, the barrel splashes water on the fire without much effect. In this case, visibility is reduced by half.

Use the bandit statistics from the caravan stop, as necessary. At night the bandits don't sleep in their armor, so they have AC 10 rather than AC 6.

3C. Strongroom. Crude construction has recently raised dust here, where piled rocks wall off an alcove. Set into the wall is a rough door with a bolt and padlock that can be picked at normal chances, or smashed with 6 hp damage. Only Mogun has the key. It will take two hours' work to disassemble the wall.

The bulkier items of booty are stored here until they can be sold. So far, no one has figured out how to get rid of this stuff this without giving away the fact that the items are stolen. There are five boxes in all, some of rough timber, others original packing cases.

The first box holds a silk jacket (worth 80 gp), four sets of small saddle bags (3 gp each), a good cart harness (2 gp), four saddle blankets (3 sp each), and 50′ of light chain (150 gp).

The second box contains a 3-yard-by-8-yard canvas tarpaulin (24 sp), 50′ of rope (1 gp), and a small basket (5 cp).

The third box holds a disassembled sedan chair made of fine woods, lacquered and gilded. Its carrying poles are missing (the bandits didn't know what was in the crate and so neglected to snatch the accompanying poles), so the chair's value is reduced to 90 gp.

The fourth box has a grappling hook (8 sp), a 10′-square fishing net (4 sp), and a complete block and tackle (one ton lift, worth 10 gp).

The last box holds books that the

bandits can find no use for. Fifty books on varying subjects remain, each worth 10–40 gp. Unnoticed in this batch is a traveling spell book with *change self, gaze reflection,* and *light* spells.

4. Mogun's Quarters. The half-ogre is only 25% likely to be here if the PCs arrive at the gorge during daylight. He spends most of his time (75%) with Fraggart, lifting heavy machine parts or simply standing puzzled as the gnome works on the contraption. (See area 9.) If Mogun is in his quarters, he's in the bed chamber (area 4D) trying to sleep.

4A. Tree Bridge. A fallen tree has been used here as a bridge. The stream, 2' below the trunk, is unobstructed except when the water level rises to flood stage.

Any weight over 500 lbs. will break the branches and roots where the tree contacts the banks of the stream. If more than this weight is placed on the bridge, each person crossing must make a Dexterity check or fall noisily, with a 95% chance of alerting any NPCs within 60'.

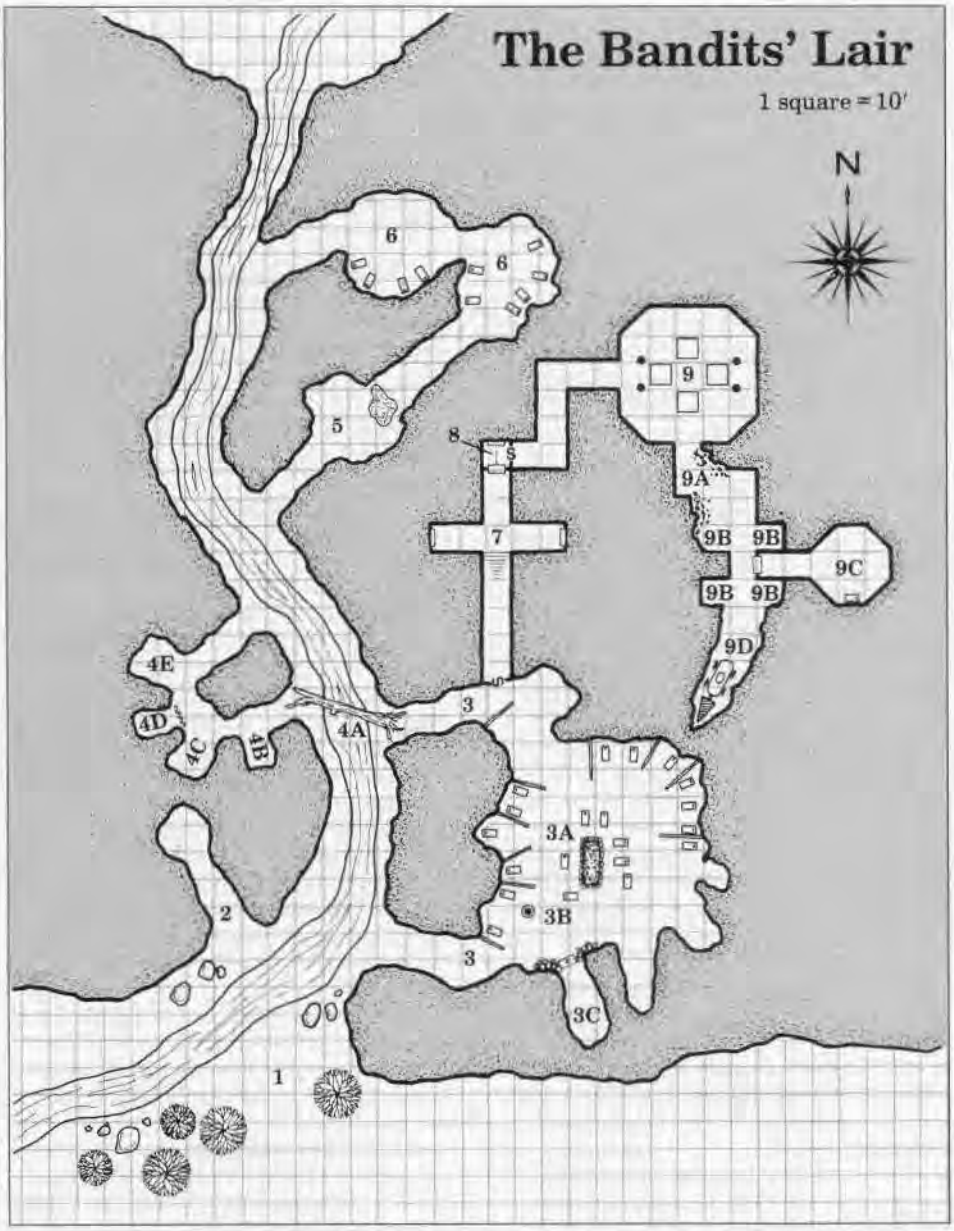
4B. Mogun's Wine Supply. A pewter goblet is lying near a 16-gallon barrel that contains 12 gallons of red wine. Recently, Mogun has given up his boozy brooding on the bandits' lackluster success rate and turned his attention to helping Fraggart with the project at area 9D.

4C. Table and Stools. This table is made of split logs. The three stools are rounds of timber, one being noticeably taller than the others, to allow a gnome to sit at the table.

4D. Bed Chamber. The piece of hide partitioning this area gives way to a rough bed, larger than any of the bedrolls found at area 3. If Mogun is present and has not been alerted, he is asleep in here.

Under the bed is a chest containing the half-ogre's personal treasure: a gold wind vane (worth 200 gp), several bracelets (50 gp total), 345 gp in cash, and gems worth 200 gp (×3) and 5 gp (×100). The 500-gp ransom paid by the gnomes for Fraggart's release has been divided among the individual bandits.

If Mogun was here and was alerted to the PCs presence, he has gone to the alcove (area 4E) to release the tethered rust monster as a surprise welcome for the adventurers.



Mogun is the offspring of a captive human woman and an ogre. Shortly after he was born, his mother was slain for food. The newborn Mogun would surely have perished too without both the innate toughness that his paternal genes gave him and his adoption by a female ogre who had recently delivered a stillborn child.

Mogun's upbringing was harsh, and he witnessed atrocities from an early age. By the age of 12, his non-ogrish characteristics were intolerable to the ogre clan, while his less-than-human traits made him an abomination to human communities. Forced to leave his home, Mogun learned to disguise his features in heavy clothing that concealed the gray tint to his flesh and the occasional disgusting wart, while a deep cowl hid his green eyes with their white pupils. Nonetheless, he grew resentful of his half-brethren, and he took to banditry to survive.

In time, his great Strength and superior Charisma made him leader of his current band. Like ogres, bandits tend

to measure a person's ability to lead by their force of arm and personality. Mogun is reasonably content but doesn't acknowledge the weakness of loneliness in front of his men.

Kidnappings—like Fraggart's—are a ploy Mogun has used before when all else failed. However, when the gnome began making demands for resources, the half-ogre was intrigued. Obsessed with completing the contraption, Fraggart no longer dwelt on his revulsion for Mogun, which was a new experience. Gradually, Mogun took an interest in the project, though he's unsure exactly what's being made. Instead, he's secretly enjoying the company of the gnome, and the time he's been spending with him in the workshop. Though bossy, Fraggart is the nearest thing to a friend Mogun has had over the past 20 years.

The half-ogre is a formidable opponent. He stands 8′ tall, is only mildly odorous, and favors a huge club in combat (Dmg 1d6+2). He wears hide armor and carries a large shield, further reducing his Armor Class.

Mogun (half-ogre): INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 19 (+3, +7), D 12, C 17, I 9, W 9, Ch 15; SZ L (8′ tall); ML 12; XP 270; MM/274–275; hide armor and shield, large club (Dmg 1d6+2). Around his neck is the key to the padlock at area 3C.

4E. Rust Monster. A long rope tethers a rust monster to a large stalactite in this alcove. Mogun discovered the rust monster foraging in the living area (area 6) and decided to keep it as a pet and a distraction for any unwanted visitors.

If the half-ogre has time to reach this cave before the PCs, he releases the rust monster to ambush the party. The monster attacks the nearest armored or heavily armed character while Mogun tries to fight off the remainder. The creature can smell metal at 90′, and it will stop for a round to eat any decoys (iron spikes, hammer, etc.) the PCs might discard. The creature is 30% likely to stop even in the middle of combat to make a meal of some metal item.

If PCs come here while Mogun is away, they might choose to release the rust monster, especially if they need a weapon against the contraption. If this is the case, the DM should note how much damage the monster does to the machine, as it might be rendered useless if the adventurers have an opportunity to capture the device for their own use.

Rust monster: INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg nil; SA rust metal; SD metal weapons striking monster also rust; SZ M (5′ long); ML 9; XP 270; MM/305.

5. Disused Cave. The reason that this cavern is disused lies near its northern exit. A large puddle of green slime covers a spot on the floor approximately 5′ long and 2′ wide. This is the remains of one of the bandits, who was attacked by the main colony of green slime that clings to the ceiling above the threshold.

The ceiling colony may attack passers-by normally, but the floor-dwelling slime can dissolve only those who walk or fall into it.

Any loud disturbances in this cave are 90% likely to alert the bandits (if any) at area 6 to the PCs' presence.

Green slime (two patches): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD 2; hp 14, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA turn victim to slime in 1-4 melee rounds unless scraped off, cut away, frozen, burned, or killed with a *cure disease* spell; dissolve 1″ of wood in one hour; dissolve plate mail in three melee rounds; SD immune to weapons and most spells; SZ S (2′-4′); ML 10; XP 65; MM/278-279 (Ooze/Slime/Jelly).

6. Second Living Area. These caves house an additional 10 bandits. This crew is supposed to keep a lookout on the northern end of the gorge, but a sentry is only 25% likely to be on duty, due to fatigue and general carelessness.

If combat breaks out here, use the bandit statistics from the caravan stop. These bandits carry their valuables (10-40 gp each) on their persons.

7. Entrance to the Wizard's Lair. A wizard named Drin added these tunnels to the natural caves, making himself an underground lair. Though Drin is long dead, his lair is in good repair, and his works (including the plans to Fraggart's Contraption) remain mostly intact.

The east and west doors at this crossroads are false, designed to lure intruders into a trap. Anyone who approaches within 5′ of either door steps on a pressure pad the width of the corridor. A dwarf, if actively searching for stonework traps, may detect the pad with a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. If triggered, the trap launches a single spear at 4′ height, from a concealed hole in the door. The spear's range is 20′, and any PC less than 4′ high is unaffected. Others must try to avoid the spear by saving vs. paralysis. Only one person can be hit by the spear, taking 1-6 hp damage.

The trap can be reset (as Fraggart discovered) by reloading a spear into the hole in the door, butt-end first.

8. Third False Door. The northern door of this 10′ × 10′ chamber is false and the trigger of a trap. Unfortunately, the trap is different from the spear trap described at area 7.

If anyone tries to open this door, the whole floor opens along its north-south axis, depositing anyone in the room into a 10′-deep pit for 1-6 hp damage.

A successful Dexterity check allows a PC to grab the lip of the pit in time. The PC can either lower himself gently into the hole (no damage) or try a Strength check to climb out unaided.

The pit recloses in one turn unless wedged open. Anyone inside the pit when the floor closes must wait for the trap to be triggered before escape is possible. A long pole or similar object can trigger the trap without depositing the opener into the pit.

The secret door in the east wall is accessible when the pit is closed. It leads to the laboratory (area 9).

9. Laboratory and Workshop.

The corridor here is thick with dust except for a pathway worn through its middle by two sets of prints: one of a small humanoid of halfling or gnomish size, the other perhaps a bit bigger than a man.

Looking around the last bend, you see a large hall with a smooth ceiling supported by four pillars. Around the center of the floor are four tables, their legs shrouded in cobwebs but their work surfaces littered with tools, oddments of metal, scraps of paper, and half-eaten rations of recent vintage.

A small furnace, its coals burned low, sits in the northeast corner of the room. A flue exits into the ceiling. Around the floor are splashes of once-molten metal.

The walls are hung with long shelves of glassware, many of the vessels holding mere sludge where chemicals long ago evaporated. Here

and there, however, are clean retorts, flasks, and jars that have been recently washed and replaced on the shelves.

Lanterns hang from each pillar, illuminating the room and an exit to the south. From some distance beyond this exit comes the noise of metallic clanking and the cranking of machinery in motion.

The tools, metal, and odds and ends were all waste from making the contraption, which is now completed. The paper holds only scribbled calculations and mathematical formulas. The glassware, worth 12,000 gp, is almost impossible to transport without loss. If PCs take reasonable precautions, the glassware depreciates a mere 1,000-6,000 gp per day's travel to a suitable market. If the adventurers are careless, the loss is 2,000-12,000 gp per day.

Fraggart and Mogun recently discovered that the contraption was too big in its completed state to get out the western exit of the laboratory, across the pit trap, through the doors, and down the steps. Instead of disassembling the completed item, moving the pieces outdoors, and putting the contraption back together, Fraggart built a mine-boring attachment and is in the process of drilling his way out from 9D. The PCs can hear the drilling from the laboratory.

If Mogun has not been previously encountered, he's 75% likely to be keeping an eye on the gnome's progress from area 9B. Otherwise he's at area 4, taking a rest and leaving Fraggart to tinker with the contraption alone.

9A. Cut Corners. The right-angle bends in this tunnel have been hacked away to allow the contraption to roll down the corridor without getting stuck. The PCs can see the marks of its thin iron wheels in the dust, as well as Fraggart's and Mogun's footprints.

9B. Storage Alcoves. These niches were once filled with rations, water, and other provisions belonging to Drin. Only some crumbling boxes remain here now, as well as five dead rats killed by the gnome and the half-ogre in the course of their explorations.

If Mogun wasn't encountered at area 4, he's standing in the corridor here, with his back to the party. Because of the noise from the drilling attachment at area 9D, he's surprised on a roll of 1-5. If not surprised, he turns at some change in the draft from the laboratory, or hears a footfall before the PCs can sneak up on him. As soon as Mogun becomes aware of the PCs, he tries to reach the contraption, yelling for Fraggart to get the thing in motion for its first test run.

9C. Bed Chamber. Once Drin's bed chamber, this is erratically used by Fraggart the gnome. He has managed to live on just four hours sleep per night since starting work on the contraption. The bed has a dishevelled appearance, and indeed has a distinct musty odor, since the blankets have been on the shelf for 20 years without a good airing.

A wardrobe against the north wall once held Drin's clothes, but now they are only threads, mothballs having been lacking for some time. Discarded atop the wardrobe is a spell book. Fraggart recognizes its value but has no present use for the book, which contains the spells *alarm, armor, comprehend languages, ESP, Leomund's trap, scare, haste,* and *slow.*

In the east wall, a seemingly useless arch doesn't lead anywhere. It's inscribed with occult symbols and once led to a far-flung plane, where the wizard Drin ultimately met his fate.

The inert portal may reactivate if some minor magical item is sacrificed by touching it to the keystone of the arch, allowing a further adventure on a second plane. As an alternative, the portal may simply be a *teleportation* device (no error) that leads safely to area 1, outside the gorge.

Of course, the arch may simply be burned out, remaining inert forever. Any attempt to remove it results in its permanent destruction.

9D. Fraggart's Contraption.

At the end of this cul de sac is the source of the peculiar metallic clanking. A long capsule made from iron and steel is parked at the end of the corridor.

The device rests on four iron wheels and has a long screw attached to its farthest end. The screw is a mounting point for a metal jaw, complete with steel teeth. The whole capsule is bouncing up and down noisily as the screw turns, rotating the jaw, crunching rock and earth, and extending a tunnel toward the southwest.

The upper body of a small, bearded person sticks out through a hatch atop the metal monster and seemingly controls it. This centaurlike portion of the monster is a dusty figure wearing goggles and a red bandanna, and clutching a large can of oil. The figure is unmistakably a gnome.

If Fraggart becomes aware of the PCs before they can restrain him, add the following:

The gnome sees you and drops quickly inside the capsule, pulling the hatch closed behind him. A second later, the grinding noise rises in pitch, and the screw becomes unattached from the device, its metal jaws whirling for a few moments then screeching to a halt. The capsule clangs, bumps up and down for a moment more, then lurches with a squeal toward the laboratory. Several small rods now protrude from its metal skin like stubby hairs, some of them glowing with magical fire!

Pulling the hatch shut takes one round, removing the screw takes a second round, and setting the contraption in motion takes a third round.

Fraggart is now totally obsessed with what he considers his invention and is unconcerned about Mogun's motives, the bandits, or the PCs. He will stop to let Mogun on board, however, if the half-ogre is around.

Anyone who gets in Fraggart's way is a fair target. If he has time to get the contraption in motion, he heads back to the laboratory in order to have as wide a field or fire as possible for the magical antennae (the wands) on the machine.

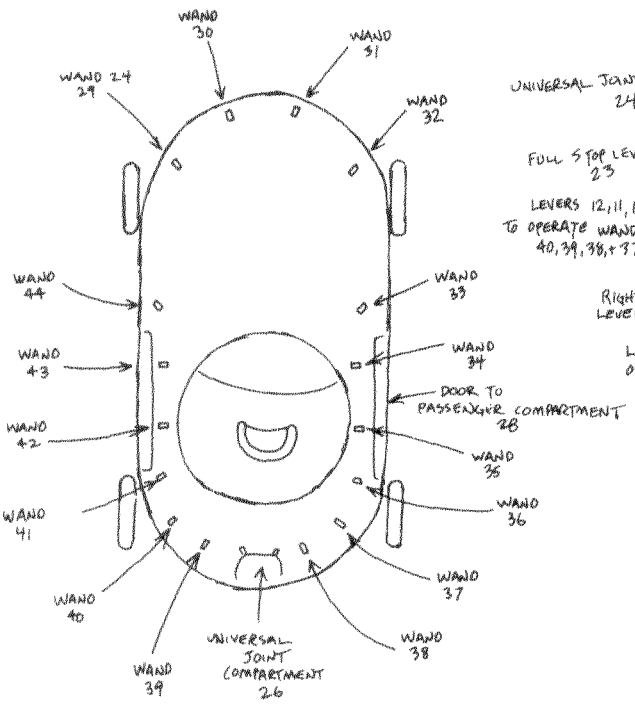
The PCs can parlay with Fraggart if they wish, but once he's inside the device he's only 15% likely to agree to leave with the party. They would do better to keep him unaware of their presence, as in six hours he will stop the drilling attachment and go to rest at area 9C.

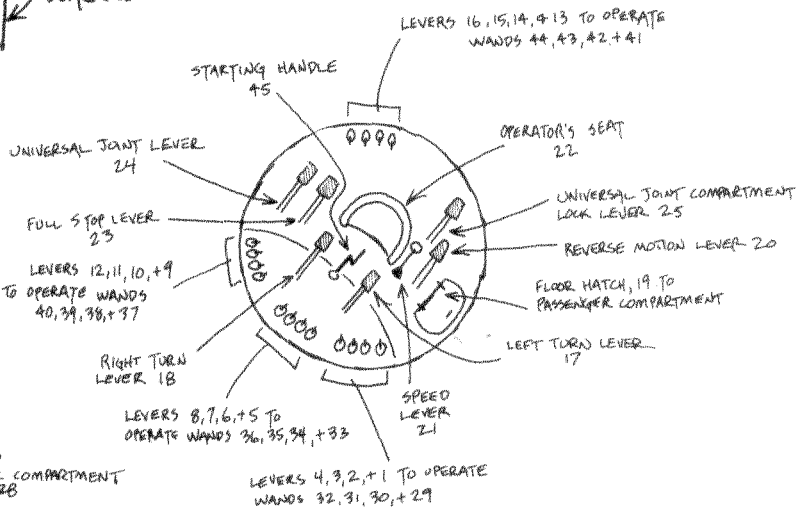
Separated from the device, Fraggart is a lot more amenable to common sense. If the PCs approach him gently and insist they're here for his own good (and also offering the opportunity to field

Continued on page 57

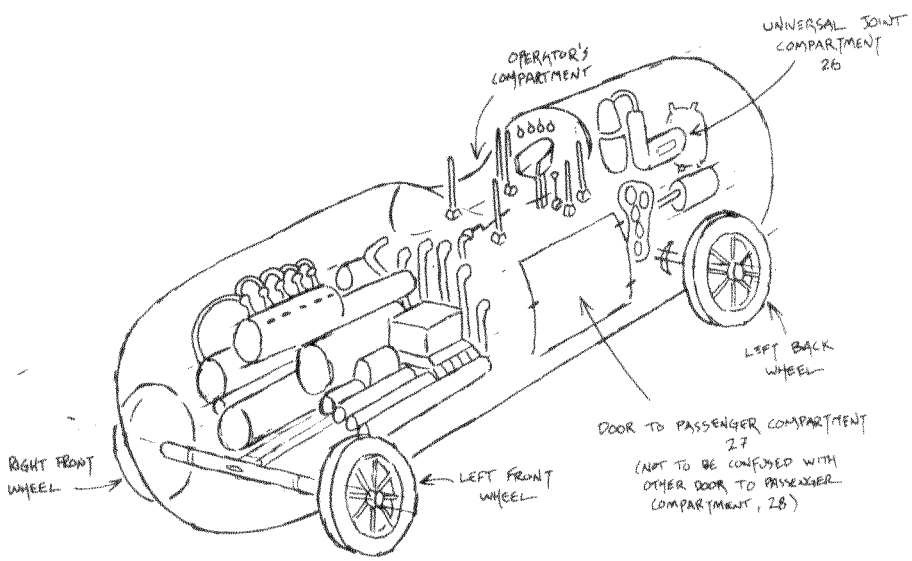
DIAGRAM OF CONTRAPTION WITH PARTS 1 THRU 45

AND FOUR WHEELS



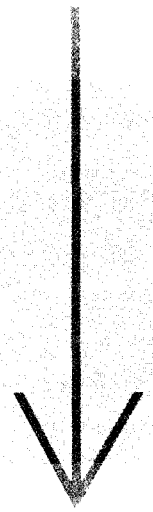

LEVERS 16,15,14,&13 TO OPERATE WANDS 44,43,42,&41
STARTING HANDLE 45
OPERATOR'S SEAT 22
UNIVERSAL JOINT LEVER 24
UNIVERSAL JOINT COMPARTMENT LOCK LEVER 25
FULL STOP LEVER 23
REVERSE MOTION LEVER 20
LEVERS 12,11,10,+9 TO OPERATE WANDS 40,39,38,+37
FLOOR HATCH, 19 TO PASSENGER COMPARTMENT
LEFT TURN LEVER 17
RIGHT TURN LEVER 18
SPEED LEVER 21
LEVERS 8,7,6,+5 TO OPERATE WANDS 36,35,34,+33
LEVERS 4,3,2,+1 TO OPERATE WANDS 32,31,30,+29

DETAIL OF OPERATOR'S COMPARTMENT


OPERATOR'S COMPARTMENT
UNIVERSAL JOINT COMPARTMENT 26
LEFT BACK WHEEL
DOOR TO PASSENGER COMPARTMENT 27
(NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH OTHER DOOR TO PASSENGER COMPARTMENT, 28)
RIGHT FRONT WHEEL
LEFT FRONT WHEEL

Controls Table

Item	Description	Use	Notes
1	Small Lever	Operates wand #29	See Spell Table for possible effects from wands.
2	Small lever	Operates wand #30	
3	Small lever	Operates wand #31	
4	Small lever	Operates wand #32	
5	Small lever	Operates wand #33	
6	Small lever	Operates wand #34	
7	Small lever	Operates wand #35	
8	Small lever	Operates wand #36	
9	Small Lever	Operates wand #37	
10	Small lever	Operates wand #38	
11	Small lever	Operates wand #39	
12	Small lever	Operates wand #40	
13	Small lever	Operates wand #41	
14	Small lever	Operates wand #42	
15	Small lever	Operates wand #43	
16	Small lever	Operates wand #44	
17	Large lever	Creates left turn	Front left wheel and back right wheel lock to turn.
18	Large lever	Creates right turn	Back left wheel and front right wheel lock to turn.
19	Floor hatch	Access to passenger compartment below.	
20	Large lever	Reverse motion	Pull Stop (23), then reset Speed (21) to Slow before engaging reverse.
21	Long, thin lever	Regulates speed	I = Slow (MV 3), II = Fast (MV 6), III = Top Speed (MV 12)
22	Padded chair	Operator's seat	
23	Large lever	Brake (full stop) or switch off	After pulling Stop, reset Speed (21) to Slow to get going again. Pull Stop twice to switch off completely.
24	Large lever	Stops universal joint	Universal joint must be stopped before connecting an accessory like the drilling machine.
25	Large lever	Lock/unlock hatch to universal joint compartment (26).	
26	Small external hatch	Opens into universal joint compartment	Must be unlocked from inside using hatch lever (25).
27-28	Large external hatch	Allows passengers to enter/leave compartment	No handle on outside. Driver must descend via hatch 19 to let pedestrians in, or passengers must open the door from inside.
29-44	Half-inch thick, 1" long solid iron rod	Wands for channeling spell effects	See 1-16 for controls, and Spell Table for possible effects from wands.
45	L-shaped crank handle	Start magical engine from complete stop	Crank three times clockwise to start engine. Push Speed lever (21) to Slow to get going in a forward direction, increasing speed as desired. Use levers 17 and 18 respectively to turn left or right. To slow down, decrease speed using lever 21, one lesser speed at a time. To fully stop, use lever 23. To get going again, begin at Slow speed with lever 21. To reverse, go to complete stop (23) then pull Reverse (20), using Speed (21) and Left/Right (17/18) as desired. To stop engine, pull Stop (23) twice.



Spell Table

The contraption is designed to cast spells, or create spell-like effects, when levers 1-16 are pulled. These effects are standardized, so that the operator should expect a specific spell to come from a certain wand, once the operator has witnessed the effect before. For example, pulling Lever 3 will almost always cast a *magic missile* from Wand #31.

The contraption is not safe; in fact it is riddled with design flaws as well as inferior and hasty construction. There is a 10% chance per casting that any spell malfunctions, possibly causing an opposite or unexpected effect. This chance for spell failure is in addition to the 10% chance per turn that a mechanical or chemical malfunction occurs.

Wands are immobile when extended from the hull of the contraption. The operator must line up a target with the wand by steering the contraption carefully before firing. Cone-effect or area-effect spells might function without the need to line up a shot, at the DM's discretion. Spells will fire when their levers are pulled, whether a target is present or not, as long as there is fuel in the contraption to power the wand. Each spell cast uses 12 hours' worth of fuel.

To determine which spells are controlled by each wand, refer to the following table. The table also shows suggested malfunctions for each wand. Unless otherwise specified, spells are cast at the 6th level of magic use.

Lever	Wand	Usual Effect	Possible Malfunction (10% chance)
1	#29	*Gaze reflection*	Target's gaze-attack range is doubled for 1-4 melee rounds.
2	#30	*Sleep*	Backfire! Centered on the contraption operator, up to 2d4 HD (levels) of creatures within 30' fall asleep for three turns, unless woken by slaps, water, or loud noises.
3	#31	*Magic missile*	Missiles turn to ping-pong balls just before hitting target.
4	#32	*Color spray*	Target (50% chance) or all within the contraption (50% chance) turn red, yellow, and blue for 1-10 turns.
5	#33	*Charm person*	Stinking cloud issues from the wand instead of the desired effect.
6	#34	*Wall of fog*	The *fog* becomes *invisible* for the duration of the spell; creatures and objects within the fog also disappear.
7	#35	*Dancing lights*	The lights follow the contraption wherever it goes until the spell runs out or is dispelled.
8	#36	*Web*	The *web* becomes entangled in the contraption instead of the target, reducing maneuverability and movement by half for 12 turns.
9	#37	*Fog cloud*	The contraption is enveloped in magical fog that moves with the machine. Visibility on either side of the cloud is reduced to 2'. Duration is 10 rounds.
10	#38	*Grease*	Instead of affecting the 10' × 10' desired area or item, the area beneath the contraption is *greased,* making control impossible for nine rounds.
11	#39	*Darkness 15' radius*	Instead of creating the *darkness* up to 60 yards away, the magic is centered on the driver's seat (22), obscuring all light for 16 rounds.
12	#40	*Melf's acid arrow*	The arrow turns to custard, wetting the target but otherwise doing no harm.
13	#41	*Misdirection*	Instead of obscuring detection spells directed at the contraption or its occupants, this malfunction doubles the information or highlights it to a better degree then normal.
14	#42	*Forget*	Backfire! One to four occupants of the contraption forget the events of the past two minutes, including what controls they used, what spells were cast, how much fuel has been used, etc.
15	#43	*Blur*	The malfunction creates a magical field similar to *cursed* armor. All missile and melee attack rolls are at +2 on the first attempt and +4 on the second. Occupants suffer −1 on saving throws against any direct magical attack. The field lasts for nine rounds.
16	#44	*Ray of enfeeblement*	The target creature is instead the recipient of a *strength* spell (see the *Player's Handbook,* page 146), which lasts for six hours.

Continued from page 53

test his creation against real monsters), the gnome is 65% likely to abandon his idea of using the contraption with the bandits and instead offers to join the party. This chance increases to 75% if the PCs quote the motto of Fraggart's clan ("More Means Best," written on the map Gruble gave them).

If he befriends the adventurers, Fraggart becomes quite open about which levers do what, inviting the PCs to join him in the capsule when he again cranks it up to drill the escape tunnel. This tunnel emerges from the northeast portion of area 3 after six hours' work. The gnome offers no clues to how the machine is fuelled, a technique he has memorized and refuses to divulge to anyone.

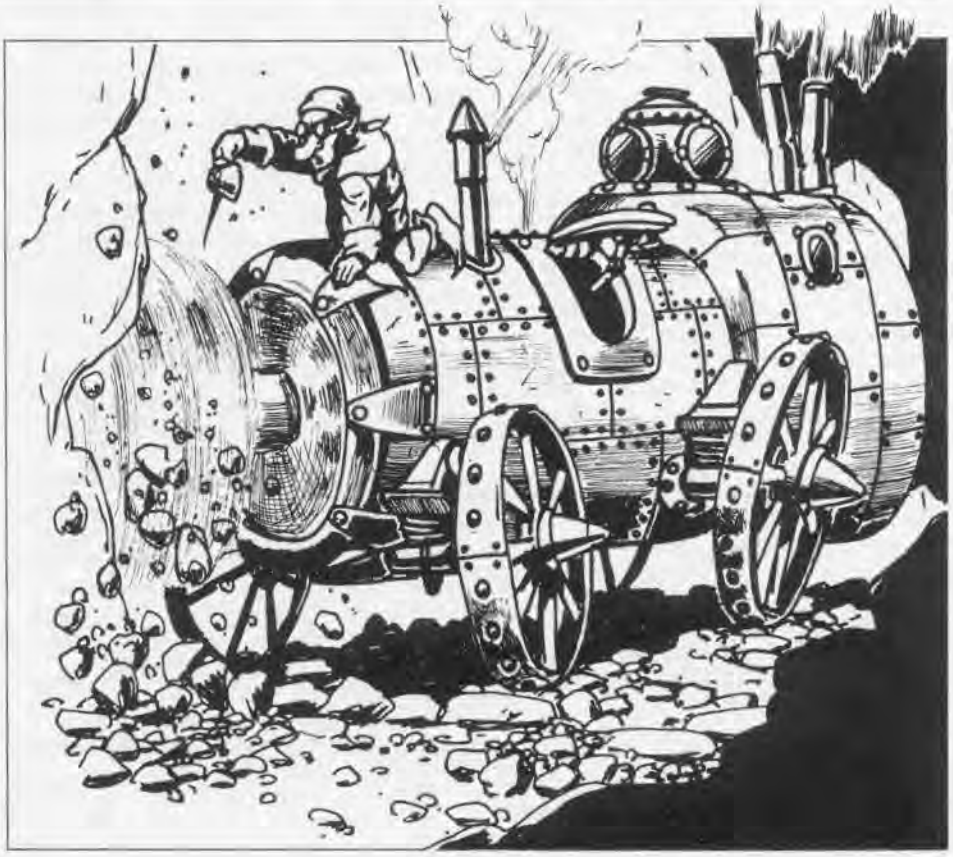
Fraggart, gnome: AL CN; AC 6; MV 6; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (including contraption); SA +1 to hit kobolds and goblins; SD −4 on attacks from giant-class creatures, +3 on saves vs. spells and poison; S 17 (+1, +1), D 18, C 12, I 18, W 8, Ch 16; SZ S (3' tall); ML 12; MM/159; toolkit with hammer, eight wrenches, a wooden mallet, and three screwdrivers; red bandanna; goggles; oil can with 1½ pints of oil.

Fraggart keeps a scroll case holding the plans of the contraption on his person at all times. These plans do not include the secret fuel formula, which Fraggart has memorized. If forced to fight outside the contraption, he uses his hammer for 1-4 hp damage at −2 to attack rolls due to nonproficiency.

The Contraption

Fraggart's contraption is a cylinder of metal 16' long and 8' wide, made of riveted sheets of metal. It has four spoked iron wheels (a potential design flaw) fully visible outside the hull, and a small hatch in its top through which an operator can view the surrounding area. Twin doors are set in the hull, one on the port side and one to starboard. These doors can be opened from the inside only, and unless passengers are already in the compartment, the operator must leave his booth to let people in. The capsule (passenger compartment) holds four man-sized creatures; the operator sits upstairs.

The internal power and motion of the contraption is generated by a mass of



tubes and containers that hold chemicals and spell components known only to Fraggart. A typical fill-up will cost 5,000 gp in materials (Fraggart found many of the required materials in Drin's laboratory), but this investment will run the machine for 336 hours (28 12-hour days).

At the rear of the machine is a small door, which locks from inside. When the contraption is started up, a universal joint rotates inside this compartment, inflicting 3d6 hp damage per round to anyone caught in the spinning joint. The joint may be isolated (switched off) while an external accessory, such as the drilling machine, is attached. So far, this accessory is the only machine designed to attach to the contraption, but others may be devised, such as a threshing machine, a mill wheel, or anything that can gain energy from a spinning motion.

It takes one round to isolate the universal joint in the compartment; the main power can remain on while doing this. It takes another round to detach or attach the accessory, which must be done physically, from outside the machine. Finally, it takes one round to close and lock the access door from within.

Using an accessory drains power proportionately: one hour's use drains one hour's fuel.

Attacks aimed at passengers or crew must first pierce the hull of the contraption, which provides AC −2 protection. If a breach occurs, passengers are still allowed their personal Armor Class (without Dexterity adjustments). In addition to providing armored protection and mobility at a movement rate of 12, the contraption can be used offensively. (Use the maneuverability rules for Aerial Combat in the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide,* pages 77-78. The device moves on the ground only but makes turns at speed with Class D maneuverability.) In simple terms, a man-sized or smaller creature can be run down, the victim taking 4d6 hp damage if hit. Unless a target is lying helpless in the direct path of the contraption, an attack roll is required, using the operator's THAC0 score.

The main danger from the contraption, however, is its ability to make use of its magically charged fuel supply to cast spells. Along the hull are 16 stubby

metal wands that emerge when the machine is switched on. The wands adds an extra 2" on each side to the overall width and length: the contraption is 8'4" wide and 12'4" long when the wands are extended. Using the wands' spell-generating effects is expensive. For each firing, the fuel supply is depleted as if 12 hours' continuous operation had elapsed. When fully charged, the contraption has 28 wand charges.

Unfortunately, while the contraption operates perfectly 90% of the time, each turn it is in use (or each time a spell effect is fired) there's a 10% chance of a malfunction: mechanical, chemical, or magical. This can be as simple as a leak that can be plugged with a pinch of pitch, or as complicated as the reversal of a normal command. The spell table on page 56 suggest errors for spell-firings, but the DM can determine which mechanical goofs happen using his own initiative. (Left becomes right, turn becomes stop, etc.)

The diagram on page 54 shows the contraption's 23 levers and 16 wands, as well as some other features. The table on page 55 summarizes their uses and some of the contraption's possible operations.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs decide to avoid confrontation with Fraggart, believing him to have gone over to the side of the bandits, they will receive their payment from Kronkile, Nilker, Gruble, and Frunge regardless. The gnomes will be disappointed that their friend and kinsman has become an outlaw, but at least they will have the news that he is safe and well.

Within a few weeks, however, the contraption will begin making attacks on passing travelers, whether Fraggart has the remaining bandits (if any) with him or not. The gnome is testing his device on the hapless wayfarers, making it dangerous to cross the wilderness to local settlements. Soon trade begins to slacken off, and the authorities become concerned. The PCs will find themselves in demand again when the local knights look for information about the device, possibly hiring the most qualified adventurers (the PCs) to neutralize or capture it and bring the gnome to justice.

If Fraggart was captured in the first place, and if the PCs commandeer the contraption, they return as heroes to the gnomes. It will take some considerable maneuvering, law suits, vendettas, and who knows what else for the PCs to keep Fraggart's contraption without Fraggart's permission, or without the go ahead of his clan.

If he has joined the PCs freely, Fraggart might be sued by his own kinfolk who covet the magic of the contraption, embroiling the PCs further in the gnomish way of doing things.

Whatever the method of seizing the contraption, the DM might like to sprinkle in a few wandering monsters on the way back to town, "just to test it out." On this run, it might be a good idea not to introduce the possibility of malfunctions, letting the PCs believe they have indeed made a great and valuable discovery, and letting them get into trouble later, once tougher monsters come on the scene. Ω

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drunken state for the duration of the *phantom shift*, struggling to stand and cast his spells. The PC may help him regain his feet, but the Keeper will just slump down again. When the *phantom shift* ends, the storm, wind, rain, and Keeper all vanish.

If the PC investigates the beacon itself, read the following:

> The ladder climbs up the 15'-high pillar. At the top you see a polished steel mirror, bent to focus a beam of light, tightly secured to a circular stone slab. Three oil lamps are bolted to the slab in front of the mirror. A series of wooden poles is arranged to point the beam in any direction.

This beacon functions much like a beacon lantern. After spotting a ship, the Keeper climbs up here, lights the lamps, and casts *affect normal fires* on them. While the spell is in effect, the beam can be seen from a mile off and can illuminate any object within 400 yards. The Keeper aims the light so the ship can always see it during its journey through the narrow passage between the submerged reef and the lighthouse island. He also casts *dancing lights* above the submerged reef, as described earlier.

Concluding the Adventure

There are several ways in which the PC may solve this adventure. One is to kill the poltergeist. Armed with Galvin's *wand of enemy detection* (see "Village Encounters"), it may be possible for the PC to effectively confront and destroy the spirit. However, this won't solve the true problem, Hraemar's incompetence as Keeper of the Light.

The PC must decide what to do with the information from the *phantom shift*. He may inform the villagers of what he saw. However, the provincial villagers will be suspicious of an outsider accusing their Keeper of such horrible crimes, creating a whole new set of problems for the PC to contend with. The villagers' reaction depends on how the PC breaks the news to them. If he is too forceful, the villagers may form a mob and cast him adrift in a rowboat. If the news is delivered with compassion and respect for the Keeper's prestige, the villagers will be more understanding and thankful to the PC. The DM must decide how the villagers react to the PC's actions. The PC should gain a 100 XP bonus for solving the true problem, in addition to experience awarded for defeating the poltergeist.

Furthermore, the PC must give a full report to the temple superior upon his return. If the DM feels that the priest did not behave in a manner appropriate to his religion (looting the elven tomb, for instance), he may choose to penalize him by deducting experience and preventing him from attaining 2nd level. For example, if the priest worships a war god, he is expected to confront the poltergeist in combat, while if he worships a god of love, he is expected to be compassionate, rescue Galvin's cat, and perhaps even try to cure Hraemar of his problem. On the other hand, a priest worshiping a god of wine or mischief may respect the Keeper's dependence on drink and deliberately not inform the villagers of Hraemar's alcoholism. The DM must decide whether or not the priest's behavior matches the ideals advocated by his temple.

Finally, the Giant's Table can be a source of further adventures. Although the PC may not remove any of the items, he should be rewarded by his priesthood if he makes an accurate record of the items within the tomb, particularly the carvings on the silver cauldron. He may be put in charge of an investigation into the meaning of the carvings, a stepping stone to further adventures in this region. Ω

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creature's experience point value from scratch, or you can use a −1 or −2 Hit Die modifier to the listed experience points, depending on the monster's psionic level.

Nonlinear Players

I write this letter in response to Mr. Roberts's letter in issue #43. Admittedly, the scenarios are written in a linear fashion. However, as a DM with nonlinear players, I have learned to make changes and modifications to the scenarios as play progresses. I have yet to have a scenario play out even remotely as written. The only thing I have been able to do is study the PCs and, as I prepare a scenario, try to anticipate PC actions and write my own sub-scenario that still fits into the big picture.

The key is to know the scenario thoroughly and be creative enough to ad lib on the spur of the moment. I find that this very seldom reduces, but rather increases, the impact of the plot. Nobody can ever really know what a PC is going to do in a given situation.

Walter Jorgens
Portland, Oregon

Saved By the Library

We would like to extend a few words of advice to Mark Krzeminski in response to his call for help in issue #44. The single best cure for the trouble he's having fleshing out the world outside his dungeons is the nearest public library. We're not sure how the Canadian library system is set up, but in the U.S., even a small local library can get you almost any sort of resource you need through interlibrary loan.

You don't have to wade through a ponderous textbook to get ideas on bringing the wilderness of your game world to life. Reader-friendly laymen's guides on the subjects of plant and animal life abound, and you need only choose a few types of each to give your forest/swamp/prairie a little character. Zooming in for too much detail is a mistake, anyway. A beginning artist may try to draw every leaf on a tree when he could be achieving a much better effect by drawing a few leaves and hinting at the rest.

To add more detail to your wilderness, do a little research into weather, climates, geography, and geology. Your task may be made easier if you pattern your wilderness after a place in the real world. Then you can simply search for a travel guide with a description of the Grand Canyon, the coasts of Cornwall, or whatever.

Of course, as useful as a library is, it still can't beat first-hand experience if you want to describe something. If you get a chance to tour any scenic wilderness area yourself, you can incorporate all the most striking parts into your game setting.

Once you've done a little research, sit down and write a brief description of the area as seen through the eyes of the PCs as they travel through it. In most instances, one paragraph should be adequate, and more than three or four paragraphs is probably too much. You wouldn't want to describe every tree in the forest, or even every bend in the trail, any more than you'd want to role-play having the PCs eat lunch every day or each trip they make to the privy.

Bringing a fantasy city to life is more difficult, but the same principles hold true. Check out the library for books on medieval culture and cities, and don't even try to describe everything to the players. Give sweeping descriptions of the city as a whole, or of districts of the city, then zero in on the striking details as they're encountered. Tell the players what the buildings are made of and how the people dress. Describe the squalor of the slums and the grandeur of the uptown mansions. Then, when the adventurers happen on the beautiful fountain that you've imagined a rich local history for, you can pull out all the stops while detailing the gold-veined marble and the entwined mermaid and dragon that make up the centerpiece.

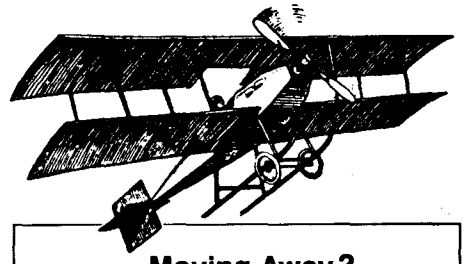
With the backdrop in place, the players can—and will—fill in the details with their imaginations until you tell them they hear a growling in the brush and a pack of wolves charges out, or until a burly barbarian collides with them in the street and demands a formal apology.

To get quick ideas for challenging encounters in the wilderness, check out TSR's *Wilderness Survival Guide.* For interesting city encounters, the best resources we know are TSR's *Cities of Mystery* and Chaosium's *Cities,* both excellent aids for the would-be fantasy city designer who has no idea where to start.

These gaming books are no substitute for library research, though. They were all written to be generic enough to be used in any fantasy campaign, and consequently offer few vivid details you can use to describe your world. One trip to the library can fill your head with all manner of concrete images. When you're researching a subject to please yourself rather than at the whim of some teacher who'll be grading your performance, it ceases to be a chore and becomes an exciting treasure hunt.

Leonard and Ann Wilson
West Fork, Arkansas

For an excellent example of the type of real-world information that can be directly applied to a campaign setting, see Allen Varney's "Turkey's Underground Cities" in DRAGON Magazine #201. Ω



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THE ASSASSIN WITHIN

BY PAUL CULOTTA

A tale told from the inside out

Artwork by Karl Waller

Paul and his family are moving to the west coast in July, but he's promised to continue sending adventures to us. He would like to dedicate this adventure to all freshmen who are struggling through their first year at college.

"The Assassin Within" is an AD&D® game AL-QADIM® adventure for 4-6 PCs of levels 3-5 (about 20 total levels). Most of the kits in the *Arabian Adventures* (*AA*) rules will be useful, although there may be too many difficulties for someone who insists on playing a holy slayer. Referees whose game-worlds include an area with Arabian or Persian culture can adapt this adventure with minimal effort.

In the land of Zakhara, copper pieces are *bits,* silver pieces are *dirham,* and gold pieces are *dinars.*

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

In Zakhara, as in most cultures, graduation from a university is a sign of great maturity and learning. Such learning is rarely easy to attain, but Diyab al Kaban, a sheikh from the Furrowed Mountains, decided that his eldest son, Aziz, would be the first of the tribe to go to a university. There he could learn everything that might benefit the Al-Badia, the people of the desert. The sheikh, his family, and the tribesmen are all worshipers of Kor, the Ancient One, whose teachings emphasize learning, wisdom, and the ability to get to the root of a problem. Diyab, however, is not just a devout Korrite; he is also a leader in the secret holy slayer fellowship known as the Wrath of the Old, which is sworn to destroy anyone who stands in the way of learning and knowledge.

Qadib, known as the City of Wands or the City of Sages, lies on the banks of the river Al-Haul. It is renowned for its many sorcerers, elemental mages, sha'irs, and geniekind, as well as its several universities. Qadib's residents are gregarious and talkative; they engage in long, protracted debates over the simplest of questions. Most inhabitants dress in yellow fezzes and golden robes, dyed with a yellow-orange pigment known as uther, a local substance heavily exported. More city details can be found on pages 76-77 of the *Adventurer's Guide to Zakhara* in the *Land of Fate* boxed set.

The sheikh sent Aziz to Qadib, where he entered the College of Religion and

Science, a small but distinguished school. Students at this institution pursue general subjects in the first two years and specialized studies in subsequent years. Graduates generally do well in all professions and are often accepted as advanced students at other universities, because it is well known that they have gone through rigorous academic training.

When Aziz arrived, he was overwhelmed by the many distractions of the wondrous City of Wands. Instead of the barren foothills, rugged mountains, and simple tents of his home, he found himself in a dazzling place of busy, colorful bazaars; imposing, beautiful mosques; amazing places of entertainment where magical creatures (which Aziz had thought existed only in stories) performed for admiring crowds; smoky coffee shops featuring scantily clad women dancing to the tunes of master musicians; and many races that not only tolerated but enjoyed all of these things. Most incredibly, there was a beautiful beach with water as far as the eye could see. Aziz learned to swim at the beach, enjoyed the sun, and engaged in long discussions on the meaning of life and other grand topics. Without the discipline of his family, Aziz was like a parched sponge. He soaked up all the city had to offer.

But there was a price for this overindulgence in rich city life. Eventually, examination time came. While Aziz was bright, he had not put any meaningful effort into his studies. Most of his grades were barely passing, but his understanding of natural philosophy was abysmally poor, and he was dismissed as a student from the college.

Aziz panicked. While he could not bear the thought of facing his father and tribesmen, he knew that sooner or later the day of reckoning would come, and that if he was not careful, the tribe's hakima would see through any story he told. Before he left town, Aziz broke into the college laboratory and took a *philter of glibness,* one of the minor potions he had studied in a course in basic magic. Then he made the long trip back to the Furrowed Mountains.

In the presence of his father and the hakima, the young man spun an incredible tale about his teacher of natural philosophy, one Hakim ibn Rashad. According to Aziz, his professor scorned the Al-Badia and would not give them a fair chance. No matter what an Al-Badian student did, Hakim jeered at his work and made fun of his rustic ways. Tests and examinations given to Al-Badians were not the same as those given to students from the cities; the tests for Al-Badians were far harder and designed to purge them from the college. Aziz had been a victim. The other professors had at least encouraged him, he said, but this teacher had no such tolerance and as a result, he had been dismissed.

Diyab listened carefully and then asked his son to leave the tent. Turning to the hakima, he asked for her insight, and she stated unequivocally that while Aziz seemed understandably uncomfortable and parts of his story might be exaggerated, he was telling the truth. (The *philter of glibness* had worked!) Diyab then went to Aziz and told him that there was nothing to be ashamed of and that he was sorry that the tribe's hard-earned dinars had been wasted on such a venture. Henceforth, his son's studies would be with the tribe (which was a great disappointment to Aziz, who had hoped that his father would send him back to Qadib and enroll him in a different school).

The story didn't have the intended result—far from it. The sheikh was furious that a so-called man of learning would stand in the way of the desert folk coming into the knowledge of the world. This was contrary to Kor's teachings, and such an obstacle had to be removed lest other Al-Badian students suffer the same problems.

Diyab summoned to his tent one of his finest holy slayers, Farid al Tigrar, and charged him with a simple mission: eliminate the professor who stood in the way of knowledge and who showed intolerance contrary to the ways of the Loregiver. Farid was called on to destroy Hakim publicly, so that every teacher in Qadib would take notice. Finally, Farid should follow the way of Kor and get to the root of the problem: Not only Hakim should die. His entire household should be eliminated so that none of their bad blood would spread further. Diyab gave Farid letters of introduction to the fellowship's contacts in Qadib, instructing them that no resource should be denied.

The assassin took to his camel, rode to Qadib, and promptly sought out the contacts. What he needed first was information about Hakim and his family, and for two weeks, many eyes looked carefully at the professor, his schedule and habits, and those of his family.

These spies reported that Hakim seemed to be a well-liked teacher who taught classes in the morning hours, ate a simple meal in the park at noon, read in the college's library in the afternoon, and then went home in the evenings. One day a week he would go to the seashore, where he and his family would bathe in the surf and look for sea life. On another day, Hakim would go to the bazaar to see what new wares had arrived, for he collected rugs, tapestries, paintings, and statuettes depicting plant and animal life. He had no vices or apparent enemies, and none of his neighbors spoke ill of him other than being mildly jealous of Hakim's inherited wealth. Finally, the brethren obtained a floor plan of the professor's large and sumptuous home and gave it to the slayer.

Farid listened to all the reports, remembered his guidance from Diyab, and came up with a plan that would make an impression on the faculty of the college for a long, long time. First, he had a *tapestry of folded existence* made that depicted a columned room with many plants, baskets, and a reclining regal tiger. A real room is magically hidden within the 6′ × 10′ tapestry, a room that resembles the image woven into the tapestry's threads. Anyone who speaks the command word ("Sho-ka") can actually walk into or out of the tapestry. Those inside need no food or water and suffer no aging effects. As one of Zakhara's items of *concealed wizardry,* the tapestry cannot be detected by a *detect magic* spell. (For additional details, see page 5 of the *Holy Slayer Sourcebook* in ALQ2, the *Assassin Mountain* boxed set.)

Next Farid procured many desert plants and animals and secured them in the tapestry. As one of his last steps, he arranged for one of the fellowship's contacts (a merchant-rogue) to lay out the tapestry along with his wares in the bazaar on the day that Hakim would be shopping. Farid knew that Hakim would be attracted to the tapestry, because reports indicated that the professor owned nothing that depicted a tiger. After a bit of haggling, the merchant-rogue sold the tapestry to Hakim for a bargain price, delivered it to his home, and put it up for display. Unknown to Hakim, Farid himself and all of the

gear he had bought were inside the tapestry, just waiting to come out in the dead of night.

The last step was the easiest. Farid instructed his agents to wait two weeks, then deliver message scrolls to the deans of the College of Religion and Science, warning them not to assist Hakim though his life was in peril. Anyone who does so will become a target for the Wrath of the Old. These messages are written on magical paper that bursts into flames within one round of being unrolled. Farid is certain that these messages will encourage the deans to put the word out discreetly among the faculty to leave Hakim alone and not render assistance to him, his agents, or the authorities.

Farid plans to emerge from the tapestry each night and kill one member of the household until everyone is dead, with Hakim the last to go. In the two weeks before the first death, Farid has come out of the tapestry and silently gone through the house at night, verifying the floor plan and finalizing the seven nights of terror to come.

The Assassin

Farid al Tigrar is a holy slayer, an assassin fanatically dedicated to his fellowship, the Wrath of the Old. Farid is 5'10" tall, weighs 175 lbs., and has black hair and intense hazel eyes.

He is typically dressed in tan pantaloons, waist jacket, slippers, and turban. Around his waist he wears a bright yellow sash inscribed with holy writings. This is a *shimmering sash,* a magical item that allows Farid to benefit from a *blur* spell for 10 rounds duration, three times a day. On his wrists are two gold bands (*bracers of defense AC 6*), and in his left ear is an enchanted gold earring that gives him a +20% bonus to his chance of hearing noise. At his right side is a *dagger of forgetfulness +2* (described in the section "The Assassin Strikes"). A *hatchet +1* is tucked into his sash. He carries a garotte (see *Holy Slayer Sourcebook,* page 4) in a stiff leather pouch. A secret compartment in the pouch's bottom contains five small rubies, each worth 500 dinar, his emergency funds. On one hand he wears a *ring of infravision.*

Farid is a true killer. He has personally assassinated 34 enemies of Kor, and he is relentless once he has found his target. At the same time, he has a sense of justice. On a few occasions, he has been known to let a victim live when to do so would benefit Kor more than the victim's death. Born in the desert and raised there, Farid is fiercely independent and protective of other Al-Badia.

Farid al Tigrar (holy slayer): AL LN; AC 3 (1 with *blur*); MV 12; T6; hp 42; THAC0 18; #AT by weapon type; Dmg by weapon type; ML 19; S 17, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 13, Ch 12; SA backstab ×3; PP 20%, OL 30%, FT 20%, MS 90%, HS 85%, DN 50% (70% when using earring), CW 80%, RL 0%; XP 650.

Weapon proficiencies: dagger (specialized), hatchet, garotte. Nonweapon proficiencies: disguise, blindfighting, jumping, rope use.

Getting Started

How the PCs get involved depends largely on how the campaign is progressing, but there are a number of potential hooks. One of the PCs may be a graduate of the college. In this case, assume the PC is visiting Hakim, one of his favorite and best-remembered professors.

If none of the PCs are scholars, they may meet Hakim's family through his daughter, Tala. While Tala is shopping in the bazaar, a thief grabs her purchase and runs away. If the PCs catch the thief, the grateful Tala invites them to dine with her family that night.

If the PCs are not in the bazaar, an ajami ranger or a kahin PC may be interested in expanding his knowledge about desert life, sea life, or some particular creature. The PC is directed to the knowledgeable Hakim, who has the information at home in his private library. Hakim invites the PC and his companions to dine with him while he answers their questions.

Other possibilities are limited only by the DM's imagination, but the adventure begins when the PCs enter Hakim's home and role-play their reactions to the various inhabitants of the household (see page 63). During dinner, Hakim engages in entertaining conversation and offer the PCs the bond of salt (See *AA,* page 17.)

While the PCs are finishing their dinner, read the following to the players:

> This has been a delightful evening with dishes of baked desert hen, spiced vegetables, sliced fruits, and coffee. You doubt that a finer meal could have been bought in all of Qadib. The conversation likewise has been stimulating, and you are impressed with the vast knowledge of your host Hakim ibn Rashad, a professor of natural philosophy at the College of Religion and Science.
>
> You are awed by his magnificent home; the whole is nicely decorated with a nature motif. There are many potted plants and tapestries, carpets, carvings, and other curios depicting plant and animal life of land and sea. Equally impressive are the numerous academic awards and degrees that are separately displayed.
>
> While you are finishing your coffee, a single loud knock—more like a thud—echoes in the hall. Hakim asks Mamoona the maid to see who it is, and she goes to the front door quickly and opens it. A moment later you hear a horrible scream and the sound of something hitting the floor.

Ask the players for their characters' reactions. PCs who turn around see Mamoona collapsed in a heap by the open door. A brief examination reveals that the maid is not dead or wounded but has only fainted. It takes a round or two to bring her back to consciousness.

If anyone looks into the gloom outside, read the following text to the players:

> You see nothing out of the ordinary on the street, but stuck in the door is an ugly sight: A wicked-looking dagger impales a parakeet and a bloody note.

Hakim's daughter, Tala, rushes to Mamoona's aid. When Tala reaches the open door, she screams and begins to cry as soon as she sees her pet parakeet, Fatima. It takes a good 20 minutes for her parents to calm her down.

PCs who run outside find nothing unusual in the immediate vicinity. A few people on the street are wondering what the commotion is about, and a crowd gathers around the entrance. However, none of them saw or heard anything out of the ordinary.

The PCs may want to search the home for other signs of the bird killer. On the east side of the home, they find a silken rope that hangs down to the ground

Hakim's Household

The Professor

Hakim is a diminutive man, about 5'7" tall and weighing 145 lbs. He has dark brown hair and soft brown eyes that match his gentle nature. This professor of natural philosophy is 40 years old and has been on the faculty of Qadib's College of Religion and Science for 12 years. He is recognized by his colleagues as one of the best teachers, and he has been known to stay after classes to answer student questions and encourage participation. His only failing is that he can be too easy; before he fails a student, he stays up for long hours praying to Zann for guidance.

Hakim has no desire to be an adventurer and will be terrified at the thought of violence. He was raised as the only child of a rich merchant widower and had all his needs attended to from time of birth with no hardships. While he loves books and learning, he abhors weapons and fighting, although he recognizes that, due to the evils in the world, someone has to be a protector of the enlightened (as long as it is not him!).

Professor Hakim ibn Rashad: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 7; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; ML 3; S 7, D 11, C 13, I 16, W 13, Ch 15. Hakim will not attack others, even in self-defense, but he will sacrifice himself to save his wife and daughter.

The Wife

Tufala is a very pretty middle-aged woman with black hair and brown eyes. She is 5'5" tall and weighs about 160 lbs., a result of the fine cuisine available in her household. She is the daughter of a rich merchant sea captain and was brought up in the finest of schools. Like her husband, she abhors violence and appreciates learning, although her preference is toward music and crafts, such as weaving and stitchings. Her main goals in life are to enjoy each day and to find a fine, caring husband for her daughter, Tala. Proper suitors do not include adventurers prone to violence, though a wizard or priest with a gentle touch could be a candidate.

Tufala bint Sentara: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; ML 5; S 6, D 9, C 11, I 14, W 12, Ch 13. Tufala always flees any combat.

The Daughter

Tala is the only daughter of Hakim and Tufala. When she removes her veil, her beauty takes a man's breath away. She is 18 years old, 5'6" tall, and very lithe and shapely. She gets her black hair from her mother and her soft, doelike eyes from her father. Like her mother she loves music, and like her father she has an abiding love of life, particularly animal life. Whenever she sees an animal hurt or in distress, she panics and may break down and cry. However, she can be tough; if she sees an animal being harmed, she may grab a kitchen knife and fly into an uncontrollable rage at the culprit. A kahin could go a long way wooing Tala.

Tala bint Tufala: AL CG; AC 9; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; S 10, D 15, C 13, I 12, W 13, Ch 16.

The Maid

Mamoona is a stern, beefy housemaid employed by Hakim and before him by Hakim's father. She is a no-nonsense workaholic who tirelessly cleans, helps in the kitchen, and keeps track of who is supposed to be where. Tala's suitors are apt to get a good looking over by this protective servant. If attacked, she will fight back fiercely with whatever is at hand—until she sees blood, at which point she promptly faints. Mamoona is in her mid fifties (no one dares ask her true age) and has hair that has grayed to match her eyes. She stands about 5'9" tall and weighs 155 lbs.

Mamoona: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; S 12, D 12, C 14, I 10, W 14, Ch 10. Mamoona is not proficient with weapons, but she will grab a broom, kitchen knife, or whatever is handy in time of need.

The Chef

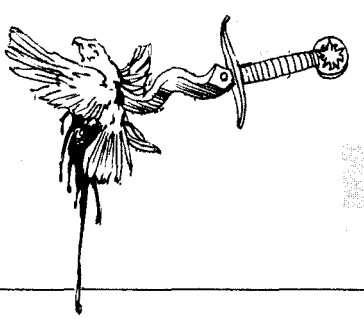
Mahatma is a bearded, stout dwarf cook. He stands about 3'9" tall and weighs 130 lbs., most of it muscle. Although his skin is as dark as any other inhabitant of Zakhara, he has reddish-brown hair and green eyes, resulting from an Zakharan father and ajami slave mother.

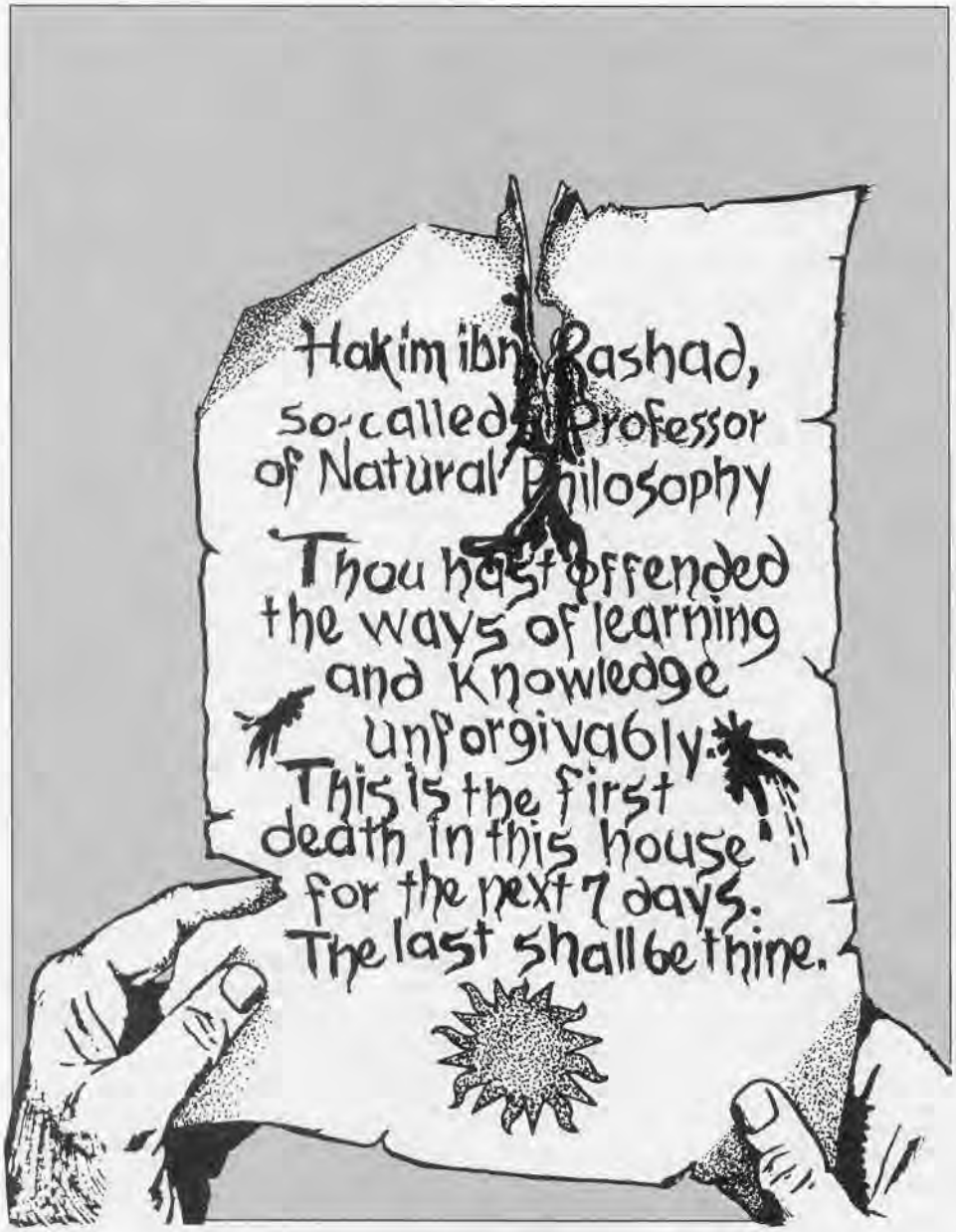
Mahatma is a pleasant enough fellow who enjoys working in the kitchen, preparing the most delicate of Zakharan dishes as well as a few recipes from exotic places. The fact that his employer is well off is a special joy, because no expense is spared for proper food.

Anyone who tangles with this master chef, however, is in for a nasty surprise. Despite his jovial nature, Mahatma conceals a deep, dark secret: He is an escaped mamluk who fled his military unit (in Qudra) for a better life. His status is not apparent because he wears a *turban of disguise* that conceals his mamluk tatoos. He keeps this turban on even while sleeping. If confronted with danger, Mahatma becomes a fighting dynamo, especially if he can reach the khopesh concealed under the bed in his room. While the PCs are in the house, he will not reveal his fighting ability unless he is threatened directly, a member of the household is endangered, or he sees a danger to Tafita, the family cat, whom Mahatma is fond of.

Mahatma (mamluk): AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT by weapon type; Dmg by weapon type; ML 18; S 16, D 15, C 17, I 12, W 16, Ch 11; khopesh sword, dagger, shield.

Weapon proficiencies: khopesh (specialized), short bow, dagger, horseman's flail. Nonweapon proficiencies: reading/writing, bureaucracy, cooking, display weapon prowess, endurance.





from a column on the upstairs porch. The door to the birdcage in Tala's room is wide open, and the cage is empty. Farid tied the rope here to drop safely to ground level and leave the dagger, bird, and note in place. He purposely left the rope behind to give the impression that someone got into the house from the outside and exited the same way. While the PCs were examining the bird and note, consoling Tala, and bringing Mamoona back to consciousness, Farid silently crept back up the rope, went through the upstairs hall, and reentered the tapestry.

The note itself must be read within 10 minutes; after that it bursts into flame and burns into fine ashes within seconds. (See this page for a copy of the note.)

The bottom of the note is marked with a small symbol of a blazing sun. The same symbol is etched into the blade of the dagger stuck in the door. PCs who make a successful religion proficiency check recognize the symbol of Kor, the Old One. Those who venerate Kor recognize the symbol automatically.

Hakim is visibly upset and does not know what to make of the situation. The PCs may call for help from the authorities, but the guards of the ruling sultan dismiss the whole thing as a prank. They do not want to waste their time on the death of a parakeet. ("It was probably some street urchin pulling a prank. It was the bird's fate to die. Go to the bazaar and buy another one.") In fact, the guard captain recognizes the symbol of Kor and knows better than to interfere.

Going to the mosque of Kor in Qadib for information is only slightly more fruitful. The PCs are ushered to an imam of the mosque, who assures them that the priesthood has no problems with Hakim whatsoever. If shown the dagger etched with Kor's symbol, the imam becomes upset at such sacrilege, but a hakima PC who successfully uses her ability to detect truth and appearances can discover that the imam knows more than he is revealing.

If pressed, the imam admits that he has heard of overzealous worshipers of Kor who belong to a secret society called the Wrath of the Old. Officially, the mosque denies this society's existence, but they know it exists to further the glory of Kor by destroying those who stand in the way of learning and knowledge. The imam has no idea who is in this fellowship or where they can be located, only that the society is rumored to be headquartered somewhere in the Furrowed Mountains. The imam knows nothing further.

With so little help from the guards and the priests, Hakim pleads with the PCs to stay with him and his family and stop this killer, whoever it is. He offers to pay the PCs 1,000 dinars, food, and the use of his guest room, plus an additional 200 dinars to spend in the bazaar for any equipment they may need. If pressed (through successful haggling proficiency), he will raises the offer to 2,000 dinars with 300 dinars for the bazaar.

If they accept, the PCs are on their own and must use their ingenuity to protect Hakim's family from the holy slayer. Moving Hakim and his family to an inn until the danger is past will not work. Farid, hiding in the tapestry, can overhear conversations within 20' and may overhear that the family is going elsewhere for a while. Farid has a 70% chance to successfully eavesdrop, but even if he can't hear the PCs' plans, he will find out that they have left when he prowls the house on the first night after the family's departure. Farid is patient and will wait for their return. Selling the house and moving Hakim's

family elsewhere also is not a solution. Hakim cannot purchase a new home until he sells this one, and the agents of the fellowship will spread rumors that the house is haunted so that no one will buy it.

If the PCs ask Hakim where they can get magical help, he directs them to his fellow faculty and friends at the college. Once there, PCs who mention Hakim's name when requesting help get a fearful reaction. Each teacher has already been discreetly warned not to give aid to Hakim (See "For the DUNGEON MASTER.") The deans were so unnerved by Farid's notes going up in flames in their hands that they gain +5 to their saving throws against any *charm* or similar spell that the PCs may cast. Their fear is obvious; if possible they will avoid discussing Hakim altogether.

At the bazaar, the PCs can purchase anything they need to protect the family. The DM should give wide latitude in purchases of ordinary items and allow the PCs to use their ingenuity in their purchases. String with small bells (for trip wires outside or inside the premises), wood and carpenter's tools (to board up windows), flour (to spread finely on the floor to pick up footprints), and a hunting dog (to pick up an unusual scent in the house) are just a few examples of what the PCs may want to buy.

Hakim's Home

Hakim's father was a well-to-do merchant who stayed out of politics and made a fine fortune in gem trading and banking. When he died, he left his entire estate to his only living relative, his son. (Hakim's mother had died in childbirth.) For a while, Hakim tried his hand at the business but soon discovered that it was not what he liked to do. He sold the business, and he lives comfortably in a large house that his father built in a safe section of the city.

The home is about 30 years old, made of the best stone and timber, with finely marked spires on a lower roof and an arched upper roof. The whole building is whitewashed on the outside; the lower roof's spires and all window frames are finished in black and gold. The windows are made of glass and can be easily opened to let in cool night breezes. The doors are made of stout wood. Although the doors to the outside can be locked, the interior doors have no locks. The home itself is surrounded by an 8'-high whitewashed brick wall that is 2' wide. Two iron gates, one at the home's front and one at the rear, are the only means of entering and leaving the premises. The gates can be locked. A wooden stable in the southeast corner of the property houses two light riding horses (Nightwind and Flicker). Just north of the stable stands a small grove of palm trees. At the rear of the home, a small courtyard is built around a fountain with an elephant centerpiece, commissioned by Hakim's father. Fed by magic, water spurts from the elephant's upraised trunk and falls into the pool. The pool provides a constant source of pure water for the family's needs.

Ground Floor

1. Parlor. Most of the ground floor of this palatial home is devoted to an enormous L-shaped area that serves as a place to entertain guests, enjoy an elegant dinner, and otherwise relax. Numerous potted plants shade the room. Several thick columns support the upper floor. These columns have been sculpted to resemble merchants buying and selling, ships traveling to distant ports, and trade caravans plying the desert.

The house's main motif, however, is animal and plant life. Tapestries and rugs show a wide array of plants and animals, ranging from bull elephants in the jungle to fire ants building a hill. Various finely carved pieces of ivory and jade are kept in a glass case. In a similar case, Hakim proudly displays his many degrees, awards for teaching, and other academic achievements.

The far eastern end of the room is filled with a coffee table, several large pillows, a hookah, and some stringed instruments that Hakim's wife and daughter play for their guests' pleasure. The northern part of the room is taken up with a low 25'-long dining table and comfortable pillows that can accommodate a large dinner party. This is where the PCs dine with Hakim on the first night of the adventure. The ceiling above the dining table is open. The balcony and the two skylights in the upper roof are visible from this room.

2. Staircase. An open wooden staircase winds its way up to the upper level of the house. The eastern wall of the stair displays more tapestries of animal and plant life. At the very top of the staircase (barely visible from the parlor) is the *tapestry of folded existence* in which Farid hides.

3. Library. This room's bookcases contain old dusty tomes and numerous scrolls, all devoted to studies of animal and plant life. The room is clearly used often; a worktable and chair are cluttered with open books and a half-furled scroll. The top book is open to a selection on the tiger. If asked, Hakim mentions that he recently bought a tapestry portraying a tiger, and at a very fine price. He has been reviewing the material on this rare beast; tigers are never found in this part of the Land of Fate.

4. Kitchen. A large fireplace, work tables, utensils, stools, and several spice racks are found in the kitchen. The stools enable Mahatma, the dwarf chef of the household, to reach the counters and work tables. Mahatma is a culinary genius hired by Hakim five years ago. As long as Mahatma does not become one of Farid's victims, the PC guests will eat very well.

The tables and counters were originally built for human cooks. A glass door leads from the kitchen into the garden court, and a set of stairs descends into a small cellar.

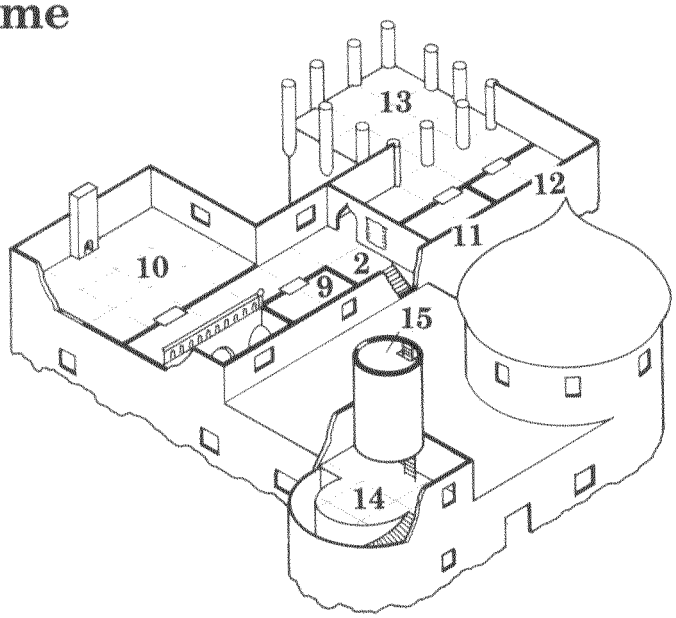
5. Cellar. Stairs from the kitchen descend 10' into this remarkably cool 20' × 20' room. The source of the chill is a magical rock concealed in a locked metal box in the northwest corner. This is another of Hakim's father's modern improvements to the home, made by a high-level sorcerer. The rock keeps the cellar at a constant 55° F, cool enough to keep most foodstuffs fresh for several days. Boxes and sacks of various types of food are preserved here, as well as a rack of fresh fruit and vegetables. Hakim's father installed a secret trapdoor in one corner of the stone floor, in case the family had to hide from war or calamity. It opens onto one of the many underground passages that crisscross throughout the city. Hakim's father never had to use it, and he never thought to pass this secret on to his son.

In exploring the house, Farid discovered the secret trapdoor. He will prop the secret trapdoor open with a small stone to give the impression that he got into the house this way.

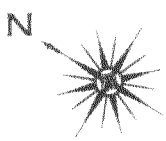
A ladder is propped against the wall below the trapdoor. It leads down 20' to a damp tunnel. The old ladder's rungs

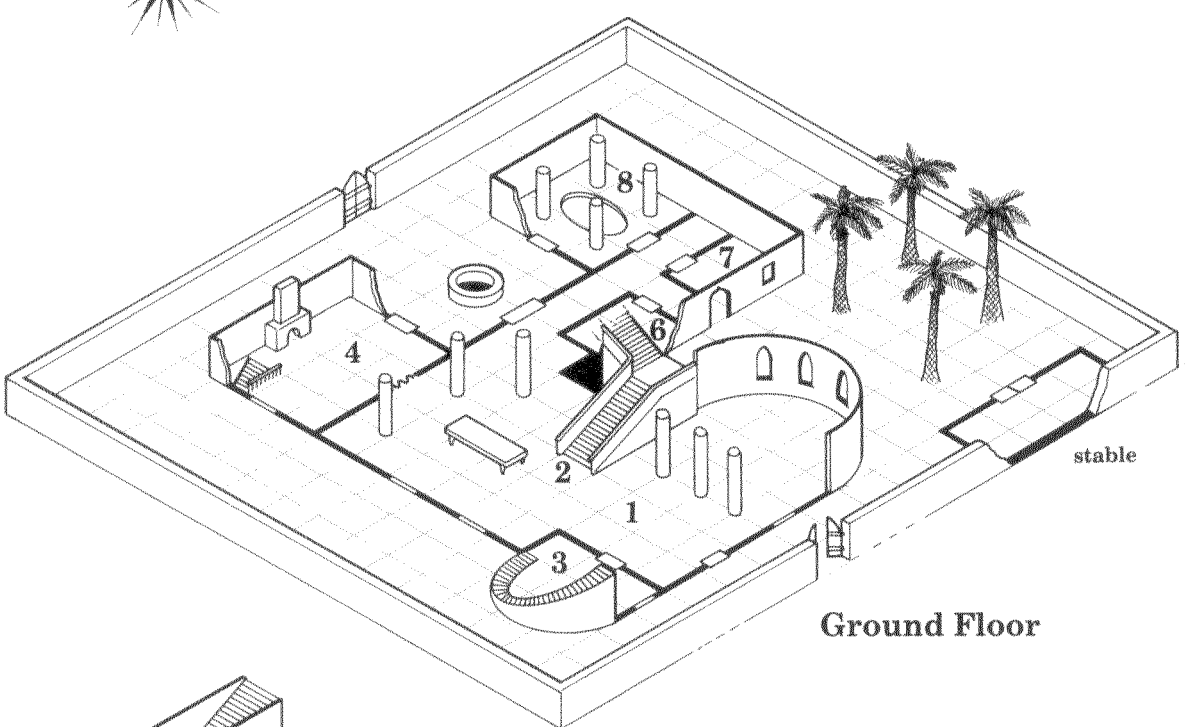
Hakim's Home

1 square = 10'

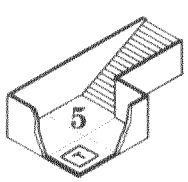


Upper Floor





Ground Floor



Cellar

are rotten, and anyone climbing down must make a Dexterity check at a −2 penalty or fall into the tunnel for 2d6 hp damage. Any noise in the tunnel attracts the otyugh that roams the passage looking for offal, carrion, sewage, or (preferably) living prey. It has been a long time since this monster has had anything fresh to eat (other than rats), and it will attack hungrily. The otyugh has no treasure.

Otyugh: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 7; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-5; SA grab, disease; SD never surprised; SZ L (7′ diameter); ML 14; XP 975; MM/283.

The remainder of the passage under Hakim's home is unmapped and may be developed by the DM for future adventures. Just the presence of the otyugh (not to mention the rotten ladder) should be enough of a clue for the PCs to figure out that the killer did not enter or leave this way, and that he has left a red herring for them to pursue.

6. Mahatma's Room. A dwarf-sized bed and similar-sized furniture clutters this 20′ × 20′ bedroom. Tafita, the family cat, sleeps curled up in a ball at the foot of Mahatma's bed. In a locked drawer of a nightstand are Mahatma's life savings: 75 dinars and 223 dirham. Under his bed is a khopesh sword.

Tafita (cat): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1 (claws/bite); SA rear claws rake for 1-2 hp; SZ T (1′ tall); ML 9; MM/38.

7. Latrine and Washroom. This room's walls and floor are covered in a geometric mosaic of black, white, and gold ceramic tile. Wash basins and pitchers of water are provided for the family and guests, so that they can wash before eating. There is also a ceramic seat with a hole that goes far below the home into the underground sewers of the city. Each day, Mamoona the maid washes and cleans this room thoroughly and sprays a fine perfume down the hole to cut down the smell.

8. Pool. This oval pool of cool water is undoubtedly unique to Qadib, as it can be used for bathing or relaxation. It ranges from 2′ deep at the southern end to 8′ deep at the northern end. The water flows beneath the tiles to and from the magical fountain in the garden court. Even if the pool gets dirty, it takes only 30 minutes for the water to be drawn into the fountain, magically cleansed, and returned. The chairs and cushions that surround the pool are fashioned like open sea shells. Mamoona fluffs the cushions and washes the room's green tile walls every day.

Upper Floor

9. Tala's Room. Hakim's teenage daughter sleeps here in a wonderfully soft bed covered with a light blanket embroidered with brightly colored birds. A wooden chest of drawers holds Tala's clothes and slippers. An empty brass birdcage hangs from a stand in front of the window, in the southeast corner of the room.

10. Guest Room. Two large beds, a fireplace, a table with two chairs, a lamp, and a chest of drawers are the main features in this room. Several tapestries depict mountain wildlife: alpine flowers, Bactrian camels, yaks, and snow leopards. The chest of drawers is empty except for the bottom drawer, which contains extra linen and bed coverings. Outside this room's door, a balcony guarded by a 3′-high railing overlooks the dining area (area 1).

11. Hakim's Room. This expansive master bedroom would please royalty. It is decorated with fine rugs and a very large plush bed, as well as bright tapestries and paintings of lilies, lotus blossoms, two lions, a herd of zebras, and colorful beetles. This room, like the large one downstairs, is decorated with several potted plants.

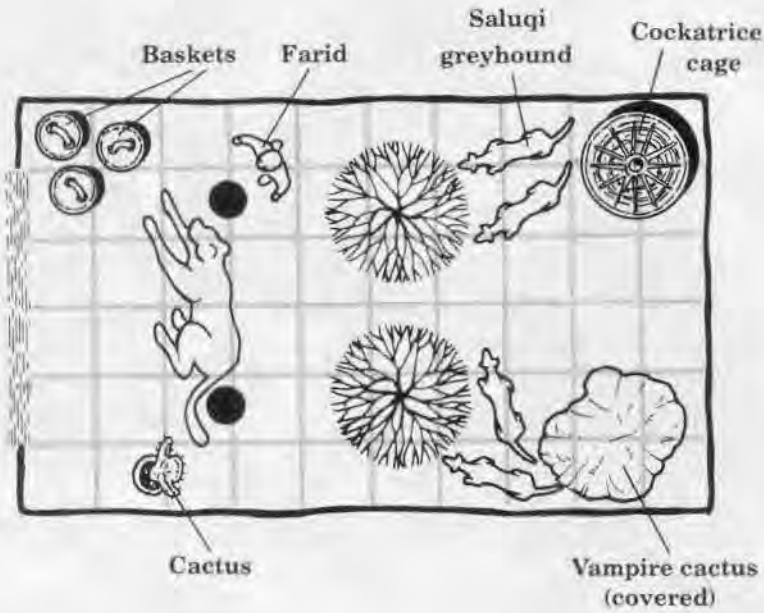
In a locked chest, Hakim keeps his spending money and his wife's finest jewelry: 3000 dinars and 507 dirham cash, and 12 gold- and jewel-studded pieces valued at 2,000 dinars, 1,500 dinars (× 2), 1,000 dinars (× 3), 400 dinars (× 4), and 250 dinars (× 2). All are set with colored gems and are intricately wrought. Hakim's real wealth, of course, is kept safely in one of the merchant houses of the city.

12. Mamoona's Room. This room is furnished similarly to Mahatma's room (area 6) on the ground floor except that the furniture is human sized. In a sack under her bed, Mamoona keeps her life savings: 33 dinars and 112 dirham.

13. Porch. The family enjoys relaxing on this open-air porch, breathing the

The *Tapestry of Folded Existence*

1 square = 2½'



scent of the night air and listening to the sounds of the city. Hakim and his wife regularly tend to the plants here, and they are thriving. The teak arms of each of the six comfortable cushioned chairs on the porch are carved with a different desert animal: camel, scorpion, lion, and so on. If the PCs do not keep watch here, Farid will put a grapnel over the 3'-high parapet and drop the rope to the ground to give the impression that he entered and exited this way, much as he did on the night he left the parakeet and the note.

14. Study. Hakim's desk contains accounts, ledgers, and cases of notes concerning several treatises he is preparing. Aside from a finely made chair (with legs carved like those of a lion) and a nice brass lamp, there does not seem to be much of interest here.

A persistent PC who looks through all the drawers of the desk will come across Hakim's class journal containing the grades of all his students during the last four years. Reading the journal reveals that, during this time, Hakim failed only three students. If asked, he does not recall any of them making threats against him.

The most recent student to fail was one Aziz al Kajam, "a likeable student," Hakim will say, who was capable of much more but who did only mediocre work. On his final exam, he answered only one out of five questions. He recalls that Aziz was Al-Badia from some tribe in the Furrowed Mountains. The other two students he failed were not Al-Badia, but were from the cities of Muluk and Qadib. PCs who visited the mosque of Kor and gained some information there (see 64) may make a connection with Hakim's mention of the Furrowed Mountains.

15. Minaret. The top level of this small tower contains a very comfortable wicker chair, a small table with a lamp, and a footrest. Hakim is a night owl who likes to read. He comes up here to study and enjoy the night air without disturbing the rest of the family.

The Assassin Strikes

How and where the assassin strikes is largely a function of where the PCs position themselves in the home. Farid will target the family animals first; then the servants; and finally Hakim's daughter, wife, and Hakim himself. His primary consideration, however, is to avoid a route blocked by a PC unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Hakim has unknowingly placed the tapestry in a spot well-suited to Farid's needs; the holy slayer can prowl the upstairs or the downstairs. If the PCs are blocking the way to Mahatma's room and the stables, for example, Farid will not hesitate to go upstairs and attempt to kill Mamoona.

On any given night, Farid emerges from the tapestry carefully, moving silently and hiding in shadows, to explore the house and see where the PCs are located. If he can find an open route to a target, he goes back into the tapestry, selects an appropriate means of assassination, makes the murder attempt, and then gets back into the tapestry quickly before anyone can detect him. If none of the lethal items in the tapestry (see sidebar on page 69) seem feasible, the assassin will slit his victim's throat with his dagger.

If Farid can't get to any victim because of the PCs, he reenters the tapestry and emerges with a creature to inflict on the PCs. For example, if the holy slayer has targeted Mahatma, and both the downstairs and upstairs are guarded, he might release the giant cobra and send it slithering down the stairs to attack the PCs.

Farid's use of deadly plants and animals to kill his victims is an ironic way for a professor of natural philosophy and his family to die. The assassin uses these items as described in the sidebar unless circumstances and the PCs' positions dictate otherwise.

If the holy slayer is confronted by a PC hiding in shadows or darkness, the assassin uses his *blade of forgetfulness* to get past his opponent. By weaving this magical blade (Farid's dagger) in a figure-eight pattern, Farid makes his victim forget everything for seven rounds, including the three rounds previous, the round of use, and the following three rounds. During the three rounds after the weapon is used, the victim stands in a daze while the assassin creeps away. Anyone viewing the blade must make a saving throw vs. spell with a −3 penalty to avoid the effect. (For additional information on the *blade of forgetfulness*, see page 5 of the *Holy Slayer Sourcebook*.)

While playing Farid, the DM should

Items in the *Tapestry of Folded Existence*

Cactus
Farid will use the cactus only if he finds an unguarded room that he can slip into quietly. He will take this ordinary 2'-tall potted cactus into the room and put it next to the victim, then he will leave. A scorpion has laid its eggs in this particular cactus. The eggs have hatched, and the baby scorpions will burst out one hour after the cactus leaves the tapestry. The PCs may hear a sound like a muffled paper bag exploding (10% chance), but are more likely (60%) to hear the screams of the victim as 30 small baby scorpions explode out of the cactus all over the room.

Baby scorpions (30): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; XP 35 each; New Monster. Any creature stung by a baby scorpion must make a successful saving throw vs. poison with a +4 bonus or die in 2-8 rounds. For each hit after the first, there is a cumulative −1 penalty to the saving throw. Someone stung three times would get only a +1 bonus.

Spiders
Farid may toss these five large, hairy desert tarantulas into a room or shoo them into a hall to distract PCs. The assassin keeps them in a wicker basket near the "front" of the tapestry.

Large spiders (5): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save vs. poison with +2 bonus or suffer 15 hp damage); SZ S (2' diameter); ML 7; XP 175 each; MM/326.

Fire Beetles
Farid uses these beetles just like the spiders, and keeps them in a very big basket. If Farid is surprised by the PCs, he drops the basket as he flees. PCs have a chance (1% per point of Intelligence) to remember that they previously saw a similar basket in the tapestry. Now, however, the basket is no longer depicted in the tapestry. If a PC is legitimately suspicious about the tapestry and examines it closely, double the chance to make this observation. Any PC who specifically mentions counting the baskets in the tapestry will automatically make the connection.

Fire beetles (5): INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S (2½' long); ML 12; XP 35 each; MM/18-19.

Vampire Cactus
This is another present for Farid to leave in an unguarded room. If the holy slayer is frustrated by the PCs, he may leave the vampire cactus by a sleeping PC. This carnivorous plant is wrapped in thick cloth that the assassin quickly removes as he gets out of the way. The cactus immediately shoots its threaded hooks into the sleeping victim and starts to drain blood.

Vampire cactus: INT non; AL N; AC 6 (core), 7 (leaf), 8 (thread); MV 0; HD 3 (core), 1+1 (leaf), 4 hp (thread); hp 24 (core), 7 (each leaf); THAC0 17; #AT 12 (no more than 6 at one target); Dmg 1-2 each; SA blood drain (1-3 hp per needle after first round), 1-3 hp damage if needle is pulled out; SZ M (4' tall); ML 17; XP 650; MC5 (Plant, Carnivorous).

Giant Cobra
Farid can either take this monster to someone's room and throw it in or, if he has been frustrated by the PCs, he may let it loose in the house to cause a diversion. PCs bitten by the cobra get a saving throw with a −2 penalty to avoid death within 2-8 rounds. Even those whose saving throws succeed suffer 10 hp damage.

While the PCs fight the cobra, the assassin slips away and personally kill one of his chosen victims. Farid has no fear of the cobra because he trained it himself.

Giant cobra: INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus poison; SA poison; SZ M (18' long); ML 15; XP 270; ALQ2 sourcebox.

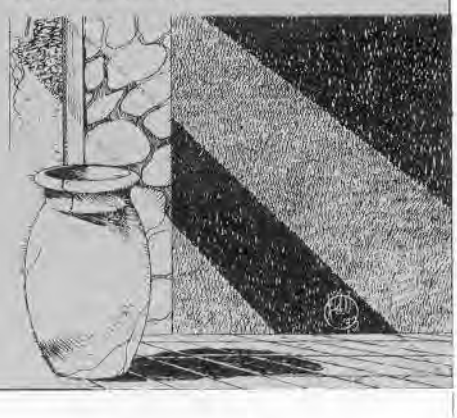
Cockatrice
This loathsome beast is yet another monster that Farid could use as a diversion. He won't use it unless the PCs are being particularly difficult, because he has no defense against its attack. Due to the foul bird's nasty temperament, it is totally untrainable. If the cockatrice petrifies a PC or a member of the household, the assassin comes back later and breaks the stone apart with a hammer to insure death. Farid keeps the cockatrice in a covered cage behind the bushes in the tapestry.

Cockatrice: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 18; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA petrification; SZ S (3' tall); ML 12; XP 650; MM/45.

Saluqi Greyhounds
These beasts will be used only if Farid has been totally frustrated by the PCs and he needs to occupy all of them so he can assassinate the remainder of the household and be done with the job. He uses these animals ruefully, because the dogs are fierce, loyal companions. He will reason, however, that accomplishing his goal is more important than preserving his pets. The assassin will order all four dogs to attack a single opponent so that they can use their overbearing attack and have a fighting chance.

When the greyhounds use their overbearing attack, their target is considered AC 10, less Dexterity and magic bonuses only. A target who fails to make a saving throw vs. petrification is knocked to the ground, stunned and unable to take action that round. The victim of an overbearing attack must spend an entire round getting up and loses any Dexterity bonus; the hounds all gain +4 to their attack rolls. Spellcasting is impossible while being harried by the hounds.

Saluqi greyhounds (4): INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA overbearing; SZ S; ML 14; XP 120 each; ALQ2 sourcebox.



try to hold off a head-to-head confrontation with the PCs as long as possible. The assassin's hit-and-run attacks should be frustrating and elusive.

Confronting Farid

One of the PCs may observe Farid enter or exit the tapestry (if a PC is *invisible*, for example). The adventure will be easier if the PC actually hears the command word for the tapestry being spoken, so the adventurers can follow the assassin into his lair. If no one hears the command word, the PCs may get it by casting an *identify* spell on the tapestry. If none of the PCs know this spell, the party can obtain the assistance of the imam of the mosque of Kor, who will contact a powerful sorcerer to cast the spell (for a reasonable fee, of course).

The PCs may think of other ways to stop the assassin, such as burning the tapestry or dunking it in water (thinking that they can drown whoever is within). Water does not penetrate the fabric without the command word, and the tapestry burns very slowly, because of its magical protections. (It will take a full hour to burn, even if soaked in oil.) If the tapestry is on fire, Farid will toss out whatever creatures he has left, then he and his saluqi greyhounds will burst out of the smoke and confront the PCs.

Taking the tapestry down and rolling it up effectively "shuts the door" of the tapestry; its magic works only when it is laid out. Farid, however, has a special command word that allows him to exit the tapestry no matter where it is. After the tapestry is rolled up for an hour, the slayer and his greyhounds will emerge cautiously to see what has happened.

The *Tapestry of Folded Existence*

The tapestry depicts a large tiger reclining between two pillars, with its head up and eyes open. Several baskets are grouped in front of the left pillar. A potted cactus plant is placed just in front of the right pillar. A number of thick bushes are planted just beyond the pillars, and behind them is a wall.

Once the PCs have entered the tapestry (they can walk right in once they utter the command word), they find that the interior exists just as it is woven. Although it was once real, the tiger is now stuffed. This well-done piece of taxidermy is worth 1,000 dinars to the right buyer (like Hakim).

After the PCs have taken this scene in, Farid appears from behind the pillar closest to the baskets. He wields a wicked-looking dagger in one hand and a hatchet in the other, and his whole presence seems indistinct and blurry. Modify Farid's following speech as necessary to fit the PCs' actions:

> "Alas, you have not only frustrated my holy mission, but you have now found me. I have reached the end of my patience with your meddling and will give you this one opportunity to leave and let me finish my mission. If not, you will certainly die—if not by my hands, then by the hands of those who will follow. You and this pathetic teacher will have no rest. The choice is yours: life or death? What will you choose?"

If the PCs choose to attack, Farid, who has activated his *shimmering sash* (see the sidebar on page 62), first kicks over the baskets containing the spiders and fire beetles, then attacks with whatever other creatures he has left. After he has exhausted all his other items, Farid sends his saluqis lunging from behind

the bushes to bring down one of the PCs. Finally, he engages the PCs personally, attacking with his dagger and hatchet.

Killing Farid and all his monsters is not the best solution to the problem, although it should be a rousing battle. The assassin's death will not end the threat. If the slayer is captured or slain, Diyab soon gets word from the fellowship's contacts, and he will be furious that one of his best men has failed. He will send out more agents of the Wrath of the Old, not only to kill Hakim and his family, but also to eliminate the PCs. This possibility is left for the DM to develop if it occurs.

The better choice is to talk to Farid. The PCs should find out what he means by calling Hakim a "pathetic teacher" and ask the slayer why he has been sent to kill the professor and his family. The assassin will not want to reveal details, but if the PCs tell him about Hakim's fine history as a professor (as proven by the diplomas and awards in the living room), Farid growls about how Hakim discriminates against the Al-Badia. Hakim or the PCs can easily refute this by producing the teacher's grading book (see area 14) and showing that the only desert tribesman he has ever flunked was one Aziz al Kajam. The journal shows that other Al-Badian students passed Hakim's course.

With this startling revelation, Farid relaxes a bit and insists on listening to Hakim's side of the story. It will take strong persuasion to get the frightened teacher to talk to the assassin, but once he understands that it is the only way to save his life, he agrees (with a lot of trembling). Hakim states that Aziz did not pay attention to the lectures, daydreamed a lot, and missed many classes. He suspects that Aziz was living the good life of the city. After a few moments, Farid insists on leaving to determine the truth of the matter. If the PCs let him go peacefully, he rolls up the tapestry and leaves, taking it with him.

It may be difficult for the PCs to let Farid go if he has killed anyone, but he snarls at the PCs to have faith that Kor's knowledge and insight will ensure that justice is done. If the adventurers try to obstruct him in any way, the assassin will engage them in combat long enough to get away (kicking over baskets to let the monsters cover his escape).

Obviously, negotiating with Farid will be easier if a PC casts a successful *friends, charm person,* or *suggestion* spell, but the DM should give latitude to those PCs who take the diplomatic course and role-play well.

After Farid leaves, there is a two-day delay while he puts his spies to work, trying to determine what really happened. Ordinary-looking visitors interview many of Aziz's classmates and Hakim's peers. In the end, the truth is clear: Hakim is a fair, honest teacher devoted to the passing of knowledge to his students, and Aziz was a freshman majoring in wine, women, and song.

On the morning of the third day, a messenger arrives with a scroll addressed to the PCs and Hakim. The scroll apologizes for the misunderstanding and states that arrangements have been made with the chief imam of the mosque of Kor to raise any who were slain, at no cost. The messenger also delivers a small pouch with five fine gems (total value 3,000 dinars).

Finally, a few odd-shaped packages are left for Professor Hakim. These contain any of the monsters that Farid did not use: the stuffed tiger, several baskets, a covered plant (the vampire cactus), and one cloaked cage (containing the cockatrice). He has decided to donate them to the college for whatever use is deemed appropriate. Hakim is absolutely delighted with this priceless donation and gives all the gems to the PCs as their reward (along with the money he promised them). He also persuades his dean to part with one minor magical item for each of the PCs.

The note from the messenger bursts into flames 10 minutes after it has been opened, to eliminate any trace of the Wrath's presence, and the messenger himself vanishes (using a *ring of invisibility*).

As for Farid, he travels back to the Furrowed Mountains with the truth. When Aziz is confronted, he breaks down and confesses all. The sheikh is dismayed at his son's lying and trickery, and banishes him from the tribe without food, water, weapons, money, or supplies. With a single old camel, the young Al-Badian may not reach civilization, but if he does, he will investigate how his father learned the truth. If he discovers the PCs' involvement, he will do his utmost to exact an unpleasant revenge. This is for the DM to develop as he sees fit for another tale in Zakhara, the Land of Fate. Ω

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Concluding the Adventure

Even if the party defeats the fire elemental and extinguishes the savannah fire, thoughtful PCs will know that their task is not yet finished. Although the fire has been stopped at the "gate," a large part of the plain is scorched. Life will be difficult for the wemics and many other animals for some time. PCs who realize the problem should be rewarded with 500 XP. Resolving the problem will be difficult, however. A *limited wish* spell shortens the time that nature needs to recover, and a *wish* spell makes the place habitable again within a few days. *Create food and water* spells may be needed to get the wemics and the local animals through until the land can again produce its bounty. A quest spell (see *Tome of Magic*) such as *abundance* or *reversion* can also be used.

The grateful wemics offer each PC a choice from the pride's treasures: primitive pottery and baskets, painted leather shields, javelins and clubs, two short swords, five zebra-hides, and two necklaces of ivory beads (still hanging around the necks of their owners). The worth of these goods is practically nothing, and PCs who are civil enough to be content with the wemics' friendship (and maybe a little keepsake) should be rewarded another 500 XP.

Henceforth, the wemics consider the PCs their "little brothers" and may later invite them to join a celebration or ask their help again. They are also honor-bound to help the PCs in any endeavor, if the adventurers request their aid.

Inquisitive PCs might wonder who conjured the fire elemental and why it didn't return to its home plane. This line of inquiry could lead to a mysterious tribe and the powerful elementalist (as described in the *Tome of Magic*) who is responsible, though not intentionally, for all this misery.

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